

# **RENE WATT LEMAIRE: RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE IN LANDER COUNTY, NEVADA; BATTLE MOUNTAIN BUSINESS; AND THE NEVADA STATE SENATE**

Interviewee: Rene Watt Lemaire

Interviewed: 1967

Published: 1970

Interviewer: Mary Ellen Glass

UNOHP Catalog #038

## **Description**

Rene Watt Lemaire is a native of Nevada, born in 1903. He has lived in Lander County all his life, engaging in business in Battle Mountain. Mr. Lemaire represented Lander County in the Nevada State Senate for more than twenty years.

The oral history of Rene Lemaire contains sentiments of a small-town political leader in twentieth-century Nevada, and personal anecdotes about some of the leading political figures of the state. Although representing one of the most sparsely populated of the "cow" counties, Lemaire became one of the most powerful political figures in Nevada.

Examination of Nevada's legislative voting on major issues in the years preceding reapportionment in 1965 discloses that very seldom did the legislators divide along strict urban-rural lines. One of the reasons for the failure of such a voting dichotomy to develop was the presence of some small-county legislators like Rene Lemaire who were supporters of much of the legislation which might be termed "liberal" and who considered legislation in the light of state needs and not just in terms of the effect on one small part of the state. During Lemaire's entire tenure in the Nevada Senate, the fifteen small-population counties could outvote populous Clark and Washoe counties fifteen to two in that body.

Political scientists will be especially interested in Lemaire's comments about Nevada politicians, both within and outside the legislature. Lemaire's comments about the activities of Nevada political bosses, George Wingfield and Noble Getchell, whet the appetite for more information about the political methods which they used. We also find a partial explanation of why John Mueller was such a powerful lobbyist in the Nevada legislative halls.

Although the accounts of some of the legislative activities are colored by the author's close involvement, they do give us a different dimension on many issues, such as the "gambler's day in court" bill, which was finally killed during the 1957 session. This oral history provides valuable insights into the attitudes of a respected small-county political leader during the times when the small counties dominated legislative politics in Nevada.

Rene Lemaire's memoir includes recollections of life in Lander County, accounts of the lives of the pioneer Lemaire and Watt families, discussions of state and local politics and politicians, historical notes on Lander County, and a brief conclusion.



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An Oral History Conducted by Mary Ellen Glass

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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University of Nevada Oral History Program  
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Reno, Nevada 89557  
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<http://www.unr.edu/oralhistory>

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Printed in the United States of America

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## PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber  
Director, UNOHP  
July 2012

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## INTRODUCTION

Rene Watt Lemaire is a native of Nevada, born in 1903. He has lived in Lander County all his life, engaged in business in Battle Mountain. Mr. Lemaire represented Lander County in the Nevada State Senate for more than twenty years. Professor Don W. Driggs assesses Mr. Lemaire's legislative career in his special introduction.

When invited to participate in the Oral History Project, Mr. Lemaire accepted graciously. He was an enthusiastic and cooperative memoirist in six recording sessions, all at his home in Battle Mountain, from June 19 to June 22, 1967.

Mr. Lemaire's review of his chronicle resulted in few substantial changes to the script, amounting mainly to minor alterations in grammar and sentence construction. The memoir includes recollections of life in Lander County, accounts of the lives of the pioneer Lemaire and Watt families, discussions of state and local politics and politicians, historical notes on Lander County, and a brief conclusion.

The Oral History Project of the University of Nevada, Reno, Library, preserves the past and the present for future research by tape recording the recollections of persons who have figured prominently in the development of Nevada and the West. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the Special Collections Departments of the University of Nevada Libraries in Reno and Las Vegas. Rene' Watt Lemaire's oral history script is restricted at the chronicler's request; no access is allowed researchers until five years after Mr. Lemaire's death.

Mary Ellen Glass  
University of Nevada, Reno  
1970



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## SPECIAL INTRODUCTION

The oral history of Rene Lemaire not only makes enjoyable reading for the individual who is interested in the sentiments and feelings of a small-town political leader in twentieth-century Nevada, but the transcript contains personal anecdotes about some of the leading political figures of the state. Although representing one of the most sparsely populated of the “” counties, Lemaire became one of the most powerful political figures in Nevada. Judging from this memoir, he gained this power without consciously seeking it and as a reward for being a hard-working state senator whose word could always be trusted by his colleagues.

Although there has been a dearth of scholarly research in the area of Nevada political history, a cursory examination of the legislative voting on major issues in recent years discloses that very seldom have the legislators divided along strict urban-rural lines. One of the reasons for the failure of such a voting dichotomy to develop was the presence of some small-county legislators like Rene Lemaire who were supporters of much

of the legislation which might be termed “liberal” and who considered legislation in the light of state needs and not just in terms of the effect on one small part of the state. When it is recalled that during Lemaire’s entire tenure in the Nevada Senate the fifteen small-population counties could outvote populous Clark and Washoe Counties 15-2 in that body, the importance of legislators with a non-parochial view is easily seen.

Political scientists will be especially interested in the comments in the transcript about Nevada politicians, both within and outside the legislature. George Wingfield and Noble Getchell are considered important political bosses in past Nevada politics, and Lemaire’s comments about their activities whet the appetite for more information about the political methods which they used. We also find a partial explanation of why John Mueller was such a powerful lobbyist in the Nevada legislative halls, for the senator from Lander County discloses great admiration and respect for this partner and representative of millionaire Norman Biltz.

Although the accounts of some of the legislative activities are colored by the author's close involvement, they do give us a different dimension on many issues, such as the "gambler's day in court" bill which was finally killed during the 1957 session. Indeed, this oral history provides valuable insights into the attitudes of a respected small-county political leader during the times when the small counties dominated legislative politics in Nevada. Reapportionment in 1965 meant the end of a political era in Nevada, for the small counties not only lost much representation, but the legislative leadership, also. Hopefully, however, the small county districts will continue in the future to send responsible representatives such as Rene Lemaire to the legislative halls in Carson City.

Don W. Driggs,. Chairman  
Department of Political Science  
University of Nevada, Reno

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## PIONEERS OF THE WATT FAMILY OF LANDER COUNTY, NEVADA

I am Rene Watt Lemaire of Battle Mountain, Nevada. We are making a recording of not only my own life perhaps, but also of my grandparents'. Some of the information that will be given in this recording will be factual and some of it will probably be hearsay, but nonetheless should prove interesting to those who are interested in the Lemaire family and the Watt family. If they wish to do some research relative to this information that I will give in this autobiography, it is their prerogative.

I will start with my mother's side, which was the Watt family. In the Watt family was my grandfather George Watt, Sr., who came from Scotland. He was a native of Dunfermline, a city of Fife County. I believe it's close to Edinburgh. He was born in 1831; he passed away January 5, 1899 at the age of 67 years, 11 months, and 24 days. When he was a young fellow, he married my grandmother. Her maiden name was Isabel Litster.

Getting back to my Grandfather Watt, when he first started out as a young fellow, from what I was told, he started out as a cabin

boy. He was working for some person that had two or three ships, and he started to follow the sea. I think that was characteristic of a lot of the people that came from the British Islands. He made several trips under this captain, and the captain was very well impressed with his ability as far as seamanship was concerned. And about the time that this captain was going to give him, perhaps, a boat of his own to run and operate, gold was discovered in California. So he decided right then and there that, being a young fellow, the best thing for him to do was to go out to California. So I think he got off the boat at New York, and he worked his way across the United States to the California gold fields.

He was quite active in the handling of livestock. It seems as though he loved livestock. According to my understanding, he used to run mule trains from Sacramento up into the Mother Lode country in and around Grass Valley. I think he made a fairly sizable fortune. But in those days, of course, a fortune could be \$5,000 or \$10,000, or maybe less than \$5,000. Anyway, I understand that he

lost that, but he still had his string of mules. So he started to haul groceries on these pack mules from Sacramento to the Comstock and Virginia City. Then he also had an extended bunch of mule trains, pack mules, that he ran from Virginia City to Salt Lake City.

From what my grandmother used to tell me (of course, my grandfather died before I was born; he died in '99 and I was born in 1903), he must have had quite a few experiences with the Indians. Evidently he was friendly with them and they never seemed to bother him much. The route that he took, as far as this pack train was concerned, between Salt Lake City and the Comstock Lode, followed pretty much the Pony Express trail.

On these trips he saw the possibility of a livestock promotion area in the southern part of Lander County near the county seat of our county, called Austin. I think he traded off some of these mule critters and got some livestock and started ranching. The home ranch was called Silver Creek, and it was about sixteen miles north of the town of Austin.

It was on Silver Creek that he built a home. How he and Grandmother Watt got together, I never did hear. I don't know whether he went back to Scotland and got her, or whether they met in New York, or whether she came out West and they got married.

When she came to Lander County, the railhead on the Central Pacific was at a place called Argenta. There wasn't any place called Battle Mountain in those days. He met her in a fancy wagon or a surry, one of those fancy deals. It took them two or three days to drive from Argenta to the ranch at Silver Creek.

At Silver Creek, of course, it was just a ranch home, and there was a lot of things that was needed. I believe that my grandfather Watt had shipped out a lot of furniture that came all the way from Scotland. It either came from

Scotland or back East someplace. Of course, there wasn't any furniture manufacturers out here in the West at that particular time.

But it was on this ranch, Silver Creek, that they raised a large family of nine children. Of these nine children— here is an interesting fact which I know to be the truth—the only time they had a doctor was for the first one at the time of birth. And due to the distances that existed at the time, Grandmother Watt reared and raised her family to young manhood and younger womanhood, and she never did have a doctor for them. She raised them on the good old-fashioned castor oil bottle, which is an interesting fact, taking into consideration all the fancy antibiotics that we have today. These old-timers, they met their problems head on and did the best they could and went ahead and raised a family.

My grandfather Watt, when he finally settled down at Silver Creek, became a very, very wealthy man, not in dollars, so to speak, but in holdings, his ranches and livestock. When the hard winter of '89 and '90 came, he had an obligation at the bank that was very small as compared to his actual worth. He planned the following year to sell out and maybe distribute his ranches to some of his boys and move to California, where the winters weren't so tough.

Well, he was just like a lot of the other ranchers in that area and also up here in the northern part of the state of Nevada that got caught with that hard winter of '89 and '90. I've heard my grandmother tell about this, that it just snowed, and snowed, and snowed, and blew, and froze, and snowed, and blew, and froze. Even my mother told me that the snow there at Silver Creek was piled up higher than halfway up the windows. And this condition existed there for a period of several weeks; how many weeks, I don't know. After the storm finally let up, it turned bitterly



cold. My grandfather Watt was too old to go anyplace, so he stayed in the ranch house, but he sent two or three of his boys on horseback to try to go to what is known as the Walters ranch, right next to the Jim Litster place on Reese River. (That Jim Litster place, by the way, was pioneered by the Steiner family, who later on lived in Sparks.)

The first day these boys on horseback tried to get down to the Walters ranch, where my grandfather had about 1,200-1,500 head of cattle, the furthest they got away from the ranch was about two or three miles. They had to return. And then they tried it again the next day, and they tried it again the next day. Every evening when they'd come in, their ears, hands, and nose would be frostbitten, and they suffered through this severe cold that winter.

At the Walters ranch, there was plenty of hay in the stacks but they just couldn't get down there. Of course, in this day and age, we have air lifts and tractors and caterpillars and stuff like that. Perhaps, maybe they could have saved some of those cattle. As it was, these cattle froze to death or died through lack of food. In that severe bitter cold, some of them were standing up, some of them were kneeling down, some of them leaning against a post, just no protection for them at all. The only stock that he actually saved as far as the horses and cattle were concerned were the cattle that he had at Silver Creek ranch.

And he did take a terrific whipping in sheep. As I have been told, he had most of his sheep over in what they call mid-Reese River, near Fish Creek and Antelope Valley area. In that area, as soon as the weather broke and they could get some men out, they went out and started to pelt the dead sheep. These sheep just piled up one on top of the other in draw after draw. The pelts that he was able to get of the sheep grossed him \$40,000—I would say

that the pelts would go, on the average, about a dollar apiece in a sale of that kind. And they certainly didn't get all of the pelts off those sheep. So he must have had a terrific number of sheep in that area. But he waited just one year too long.

I believe from what my grandmother told me that this was his third fortune he had lost, and he just lost heart. He told her that if he was fifteen or twenty years younger, he would buckle in and see if he couldn't try to make another one, but it just took the sap right out of him.

If his sons had gotten in like they should, they could have undoubtedly kept the estate intact. Grandmother had to sell one parcel after another in order to meet her obligations and take care of her family. The boys got married, and whenever they got married, this aunt would be jealous of that aunt, so it was just a typical family problem. That's pretty much the history of the Watt family.

The oldest child of the Watt offspring was Christine (Watt) Clark (of course, that's her married name), and the second one was George Watt, Jr. The third was Robert Watt, the fourth was James Watt; and the fifth was Jessica (Watt) Fenneman; my mother, Helen Louise (Watt) Lemaire; and Isabel (Watt) Menardi; William Watt; and the youngest one of the group was Oliver Watt—in other words, he was the spoiled brat. No, I wouldn't say that he was a spoiled brat. He was a very fine young fellow, but being the youngest child in the group, naturally he was pampered by his mother and by his sisters. He was a very fine person.

Christine Clark was quite active in politics. She was a Democrat. She was a great friend of Scrugham's and Pittman's, and she was also a very good friend of the Tasker L. Oddie's. She was quite an artist. She went to Dominican College, I believe it is, in San

Rafael. She had two children. Her family has all passed out of the picture, including herself, at this time.

George Watt was quite active. He married a woman by the name of Estelle McIntyre, who was a beautiful woman, there in Austin, and they had three children. George was active in the livestock business, and one time he ran the Grass Valley ranch, which at this present time is owned and controlled by Richard and Molly Magee. Molly Magee is now regent of the University of Nevada. At that one time it was not owned; it was operated by a company in which my Uncle George Watt was the general manager for them, and he lived in Grass Valley for quite some years. George Watt, through some kind of illness, I don't know what it was, lost one arm and then he lost one leg. He ran for surveyor general for the state of Nevada at the same time Tasker L. Oddie was running for united States Senate. In campaigning, my Uncle George, with one arm off and one leg off, and riding an old Dodge—one of the roughest riding automobiles in those days that was built—he'd be going strong when Tasker Oddie and all of his group would all be all worn out. They had to quit, but Uncle George kept right on going, and it paid, too, because he won that election and was surveyor general for one term (for one and one-half years; he died in office). That was his political background.

Here's another interesting story about him. He was sheriff of Lander County when the Del Grosso murder took place. This Del Grosso murder took place halfway between here (Battle Mountain) and Austin, on a little narrow gauge railroad called the Nevada Central. The place where the murder was committed was the Bailey station. That's just about fifty or fifty-five miles south of here (Battle Mountain), just before you enter into the canyon going up Reese River.

They had a sort of a section foreman there and his name was Batista "Billy" Del Grosso. He had a very pretty wife and two children. One's name was Henry (he was the babe), and then another one a little older, named Albert. Billy Del Grosso would have to go out and maintain the roadbed each day. On this particular day, evidently this Indian had been watching, and after he had left on his little handcar on the railroad, this Indian slipped in there and he murdered Billy Del Grosso's wife, Angela. This oldest boy that was crying, he murdered him, too. But the little babe was evidently covered up and didn't hear all the ruckus and the noise. His name was Henry. Later he was adopted by W. C. Hancock, who used to be Justice of the Peace and used to run the Capital Hotel here in Battle Mountain. Later Henry moved to Reno. But I'm getting ahead of my story here.

This Indian took this woman, Angela Del Grosso, and garroted her with a wire and hung her up in the chicken coop. Of course, they didn't know anything about it until after Billy came home and found this tragedy. I don't know whether he notified the officials on the railroad by telephone—they had telephone connections then—but anyway, my uncle, who was sheriff, he immediately hired some Indian trackers and a posse and they went out looking for this Indian.

Mrs. Bessie Hinman, who is here in Battle Mountain right now, at that time was helping Grandmother Watt out at the Silver Creek ranch. She was in the kitchen cleaning up the dishes, and so forth, and she happened to look out the window and here was this Indian looking in. She screamed and threw the dishpan in the air, and then she ran to the front room. This Indian got scared, too. But that was the first word that they had received as to the whereabouts of this Indian. So when they finally found out that he had

been there at Silver Creek, it was easy enough for these trackers to pick up his tracks. He went over Callahan Mountain, over into the Grass Valley side. They followed him, and when they finally came to his little tent, and so forth, they knew the Indian was in there. The posse that was with Uncle George, the sheriff, wanted to shoot him up and get rid of him quick, but Uncle George wouldn't go for that. He went in and brought the Indian out. So they handcuffed him and they took him on into Austin and placed him in jail. From the evidence that they had, they knew without a question of a doubt that he would be hanged.

Now this might be an unfair story to tell, but it's the truth. Uncle George asked Billy Del Grosso, the husband of this woman, if he would like to pull the trap to hang this man. Billy Del Grosso was a very, very thrifty, money-hungry individual and he said, "If you pay me the fifty dollars." And that really aggravated my Uncle George very, very much. But anyway, even the hangman didn't get a chance to hang the Indian, and neither did Billy Del Grosso or anybody else, because some Indians came in there to visit the Indian prisoner that was in prison in the courthouse, in the jail in Austin, and they slipped him some wild parsnip poisoning. This Indian ate that poisoning. Of course, he didn't have to go to the gallows, but he knew that his time had come. So that was it. But that's an interesting story. Part of it maybe should be stricken due to the fact I'm mentioning people and their names, but nearly all of them are long gone by now. That's part of the history of my grandparents on my mother's side of the family.

Then the next son was Robert Watt. He was pretty much of a homebody. He married a schoolteacher by the name of Cora; she was from Winnemucca. She taught school there in Winnemucca for many years after Uncle

Robert died from a stomach ailment. They had two children; one was named Kenneth, about my age, and the other one was named George Watt III. Those two children were very successful in their business activities. Kenneth married Eileen Ruecktesler of Winnemucca, and he had a mercantile business there while his mother continued on with her teaching. His brother George did odd jobs. These two children, Kenneth and George, lived at Silver Creek ranch. (I used to go to Silver Creek every summer and sometimes during the winter for Christmas holidays.) They traveled eight miles by buggy to a little schoolhouse, the old-fashioned little red schoolhouse, which was centrally located to serve the different families in and around there within a radius of eight to ten or twelve miles.

Then William Watt, he was a very quiet individual. And at one time he was engaged to Addie Callahan. Addie Callahan lived over the mountain, which is named Callahan Mountain, at a little farm. She was related to Jessie Mahoney, who married an Irishman by the name of William Mahoney. That was an old family that lived there at the Callahan ranch for many years. She was heartbroken when my Uncle William Watt was accidentally killed, and never married.

There used to be a mine out at a place called Carroll Summit. At this Carroll Summit they encountered some very high grade, rich gold ore. Most of it was a tellurium-type gold. William was the chief hoist man and the hoists that they used in those days...didn't have any safety guards or anything else on the gears. He went out this one morning to start up this hoist, and it was real cold. It was in the wintertime, and he had on one of these long coats. Accidentally, when he was oiling the machine, his coat got caught in the gears and it dragged him right into it. Finally, he tried to pull it out and he got his cuff caught, and it

ran up his arm and almost severed his head. In other words, while he was caught in this machine, his body pressure was so great, it stopped the machine. These two miners that were working down in this shaft, they came up to see what was wrong, and here he was, imprisoned, actually caught in this machine, but he was still alive. He told them how to release the machine so they could reverse it and get him out of it, but before he would let them touch the machine to get him out of it, he knew there wasn't a possible chance for him to live, so he said to these boys, "Say good-bye" to all the members of his family and a special message to Addie Callahan. That's the story of my Uncle William Watt.

James Watt, he was a rough and ready; I always call him my "drinking uncle." He was a very fine person. He, in turn, married a schoolteacher who was teaching school at the Litster ranch down on Reese River Valley. Before he got married, he loved to ride horses. He was always jobbing somebody. Oh, he loved to just job somebody and get them in trouble.

He'd get on these drunks. One time he had a little place called Valley of the Moon, which was about halfway between Battle Mountain and Austin. A fellow by the name of Jack Whalen, a great big raw-boned Swede (I imagine he was about six foot-seven, weighed about 210 pounds), he and this fellow Whalen used to get on these benders. This particular day they ran out of liquor and so Jim says to Jack, "I'll tell you, Jack. I bet I can jump further backwards than you can."

Jack said, "Aw, I bet you can't, either."

And so they got out in the yard. They'd been digging this well. It was about a four-by-six well, and it was down about thirty to thirty-five feet. So anyway, getting on with this story, Jim drew a line, and Jack backed up to

the line and he made this big back jump, and golly, he did a good job.

So Jack says to Jim, "I bet you can't beat that one."

Jim walked over to this well and he got about two or three feet from it, and I'll be darned, he jumped backwards down the well! So Whalen had to buy the whiskey! So those are the things Jim loved to do, to out-figure the other guy some way or another.

Here is an interesting story. It might be a little bit long, but it's worth telling. My dad was always very much interested in mining, and he had a lease on the New York Canyon mine that was owned by the Watt family. He had produced around about ten tons of very, very high grade silver ore, ore that would run around four or five hundred dollars a ton. Every once in a while these fellows that was working out there for New York Canyon (it was only about three or four miles to Austin), they'd go into Austin, and, oh, goodness, they would really get on a big party. So they were in Austin one time on one of these parties, and when they came back, all this ore was gone. My dad had sheriffs and private detectives and everything else trying to find out about this ore. And they never did find out anything about it until recently.

During the depression years, with a friend of mine, we were working at a little mining camp called Gweenah. We would go to Austin quite frequently to visit and get our groceries, and so forth. I was talking to a fellow by the name of Walter Francis, who used to run a livery stable years ago, but at that particular time he had a garage. We used to love to go in there and visit with him when we'd go into town. I was telling Walter my dad would sure like to know where his high grade ore went. And he began laughing and he said, "Doesn't your dad know who took that ore?"

And I said, "No, he doesn't know."

He laughed; he thought it was a big joke. He said, "Why, Jim Watt took that ore!"

"Oh, he did not."

He said, "He sure as heck did."

So I came home, I think it was a week or two after that, and I told Dad. I said, "Dad, did you ever find out who took your ore there at New York Canyon?"

And he says, "Nope, I never did."

And I gave him a little background as to this conversation I had with Walter Francis. I said, "Walter Francis said that Jim Watt took your ore, your own brother-in-law."

My dad said, "He did? Well, for goodness sakes!" He said, "You know," he said, "now I can see how he got all that silver ore mixed up in his antimony ore." He said, "Jim was operating a mine at Ravenswood, which was strictly antimony ore, and he had the nerve and the audacity to contact me and have me transfer this ore from the narrow gauge over to the broad gauge, and he told me that he'd pay me the expenses on it." He said, "I hired a couple of men when this ore came down on these flatcars and had it transferred." And he said, "I looked at this ore at the time and I thought, 'Gee whiz, that's funny-looking antimony ore.' But," he said, "being a trusting soul as I am, I never had an idea that my own brother-in-law would do a trick like that."

That's part of the family history. I don't know whether I'm digging into old closets or not. It's an interesting story. That is the story about James.

James had four boys. There was Jack; he was the oldest. His dad died with some kind of stomach disorder. That seemed to run in the family. They all seemed to fall in love with schoolteachers, too, by the way. There was Jack and there was Billy. Billy was named after his uncle, Billy Robert Watt. And then there was James; he was named after his dad. And then there's a boy by the name of Russell, the little

one. They were all born at the Valley of the Moon, and I think the only doctor they ever had was when the first one was born.

This fellow, Jack Watt, was quite musical. After he left the Valley of the Moon with his mother when his father passed away, he entered the movies, and he was known as Brad King. They settled down around Stockton. He was very successful in the livestock business. Of course, the phenomenal growth of Stockton helped them quite a bit because they bought some farm land just out on the edge of town. Of course, now that area is being subdivided, so they realized quite a lot of money out of it.

Billy was in the service during World War II, came back, and he spent a lot of time raising Shetland ponies. Jim, he was just a plain cowboy. He loved to ride horses and ride bucking horses and livestock, and so forth.

Russell, when he was just a child out at the Valley of the Moon, somehow or another got hold of some lye. He ate a lot of this lye and they rushed him to Elko. Dr. Roantree performed an operation on this little baby, and cut out practically all of his stomach, and put in what they call a Murphy button. Now I don't know what that is, but that's probably a crude name for a medical term. That little baby survived and he was adopted by Rene's (that's my aunt that married Jim Watt) sister. The last time I saw Dr. Roantree in Elko before he died, he asked me about this little boy who had grown into be quite a young man then. He told me, "I wouldn't have given that boy one chance in a million to live." And he says, "If I can live long enough, I'd like to have him come up here to Elko so I can take a lot of X-rays, and I would like to write up an article for the medical journal." That's just one of those happenings in life, again, that I thought that was worth mentioning. So that's the story of Jim Watt and his family.



Then there was Jessie Watt. She married a fellow by the name of Edgar Fenneman. He was an expert certified public accountant. He lived in San Francisco. He Was a very fine pianist; that was his hobby, playing the piano. She, in turn, was quite musical. So they really enjoyed each other's company. They only had one child, and his name was George Watt Fenneman. He was born in Shanghai, China. I've always called him my Chinaman cousin.

Uncle Edgar was working for an export-import company, and that's how he happened to be in Shanghai. They were there for two or three years, I believe. George was born when they were in Shanghai. They came back to the States again from China and Edgar kept on with his certified public accountant work, expert bookkeeper, and so forth, and he eventually passed away. Aunt Jessie had the responsibility of raising and taking care of this boy from about twelve years on up. And he's done real well. He went into the radio business and was an announcer at one time. He was master of ceremonies for Groucho Marx on National Broadcasting Company.

Aunt Jessie was quite a religious woman. She branched out into religion and worked for a religious group called Truth. She had offices and everything there in San Francisco. There were many people there from the state of Nevada that would visit her and attend her church to hear her lecture and preach. She was a very ardent Christian woman, and through her activities in this Truth organization, she evidently got enough money out of it to educate her boy and put him through school, and so forth.

Then my Aunt Isabel, she was more like a mother to me than any of the other aunts, because when I was about three or four years old, my mother had lots of physical problems as far as her own health was concerned, and my Aunt Isabel sort of adopted me as her

own child, so to speak. She always called me her son.

Later on she got married; she married Harold Menardi, who was a mining engineer. They had some interesting experiences in around what they call Mill Canyon and up here at Galena Canyon during their early married life. When they got married, believe it or not, they got married right here in this home, my dad's home. I called it my dad and mother's home because it belonged to them, and I've always cherished it in their memory. She got married right there in the corner of the living room and I was the ring bearer. I was quite a character.

Here's a funny experience that happened. In this big room here there was a big, long table. (Of course, my dad and Harold Menardi and Aunt Isabel were very close, as well as my mother.) So my dad, he had to help Uncle Harold celebrate. He bought the sparkling Burgundy, and, of course, I was just a young kid, so to speak. They had it down in the basement here in the home, and boy, did I get stoned! I went down there and really had fun, drinking the dregs out of the bottles, and so forth. I will always remember that.

Aunt Isabel only had one child. Her name was Helen Meda. She, by the way, was born in this house, upstairs. Those were the days there weren't any hospitals or anything. She's named after my mother, Helen, and also after a sister of Uncle Harold's, whose name was Meda.

Now we're down to the last one; that's Oliver. Oliver, as I say, was the youngest of the Watt tribe. They sent him away to school. Having been raised on a ranch with unlimited controls, when he got down there to this school in California, he didn't last long. They got rid of him quick. He came back home and helped his mother very, very extensively in the operation of the ranch. When she sold out, she sold the Silver Creek ranch and all of

her holdings to a French Basco by the name of St. John Laborde, who was a very fine man. I think he just passed away in the last two or three years.

St. John Laborde married one of the Schuchetti girls and she was related to Louise Shovelin. They were all very fine, good friends of my dad's. St. John Laborde, he ran mostly all sheep, because he had control of the whole Watt holdings.

You wonder, and you often appreciate the fact that we're here today and enjoying certain benefits, whereas those people in those days, they had to really live by their wits. We take so much for granted. Every one of the places that Grandfather Watt had, all those little outlying farm areas, ranch areas, he always made it a point to build some kind of a stone structure over which he put willows and dirt as a roof, always a place where he could hole up in case of storm, or where they were riding for their livestock or places for their sheep camps. Always a very thrifty Scotchman, so to speak. But you don't see that very much any more. Well, today we don't need those protective places for the simple reason that we have a method of transportation that is really out of this world. We have jeeps, four-wheel drive vehicles, that take us. Of course, in those days when they only traveled by horse and buggy and by pack train, why, they had to stop to give their animals a chance to rest. Now it's all gasoline age. But at one time he owned I don't know how many ranches down in that area, just ranch after ranch. But that hard winter really knocked him out of the picture.

In reading an obituary that was taken out of the Reese River Reveille by my good friend Bert Acree when the state of Nevada was celebrating its centennial, I noticed the article states in 1875 and again in 1879, George Watt was elected an assemblyman from this county. He made an able and honest member

and he won the respect and admiration of everyone for his devotion to the interest of his country and state, referring, of course, to my grandfather Watt.

It was during his term in office that the franchise was given to the Nevada Central Railroad to build a narrow gauge from Battle Mountain to Austin. I believe that most of the people know that they ran out of time as far as having the railroad completed under their contract to run it up into the town of Austin, so they extended the city limits of Austin down to a little place called Leadville. My granddad helped put through the necessary legislation, which I believe at that time embodied a grant from the county of Lander for \$200,000 to build this narrow gauge railroad. So it didn't cost too much a mile to build railroads in those days.

Before he would sanction any kind of support to this franchise, he made a point to go to all the ranches and livestock people down at the southern part of Lander County, advising them that when this railroad was built, it would have a tendency to be detrimental to them as far as their livestock and horses [were concerned] in connection with the stage route that existed from Battle Mountain to Austin at that time, and these other areas around there. Before he would go ahead and help put through this legislation, why, he had to have approval from those people. They all agreed that they felt the railroad would be more beneficial than detrimental to their interests as far as getting supplies in and out of the area, and so forth. So he was the one that helped put the necessary legislation through the legislature.

During my term in office I did a little historical research, and I finally found a picture in some of the old journals or some of the old archives of the state of Nevada showing a picture of my grandfather Watt

when he was an assemblyman from Lander County.

Here's another cute little story that might be interesting to some people. It was to me. My grandmother Watt's father, his name was James Litster, he used to love to ride. He came out from Scotland with them to Silver Creek ranch. He would get on this little pony. He'd always have to put the horse in some kind of a depressed area on account of a game leg he had in order to get on the horse. He used to take these rides nearly every day, and he'd either ride up the south branch of Silver Creek or the north branch. I don't know which branch he was riding up one day, but anyhow, he came across this polecat. He had used snuff for years and years and years, and he didn't have any sense of smell. When he saw this beautiful cat, he got off his horse and tried to catch this cat. Well, you know darn well what this cat did to him. He really drenched him. He finally found a place where he could get back up on his horse, and he rode back to the ranch, and—well, they could smell him coming half a mile. They wouldn't even let him in the house. That's all there was to it. The horse stunk, and he stunk, and, oh, gosh, it was really terrible! He was always a fancy dresser. Goodness, when he'd take these pony rides, why, he'd always doll up just like he was going to be in a parade for the Queen of England! He was all dressed up this day, but they made him take off all his clothes, and he had to take them out and bury them. That's the only way they could get rid of that scent. That's just an experience, too, that happened out on the little old ranch of Silver Creek.

In discussing the Watt family, it is interesting to recall the fact that Tasker L. Oddie, when he was a young man, discussed the possibility with my grandmother Watt as to having her grubstake him to go down to Tonopah. He did such a wonderful job in

selling himself to her, why, she furnished him with a four-horse team and a practically brand new wagon and a couple months' groceries. He drove from Austin down to the town of Tonopah (then in its infancy). I guess he was undoubtedly fairly successful down there in his mining ventures. He made such a hit with the people down there as to his personality that they named a mountain after him. So they called Mt. Oddie after Tasker L. Oddie, who later on became United States Senator of the state of Nevada.

Speaking of mining properties, besides the mining property that the Watts had out at Carroll Summit where Uncle William Watt lost his life, they bought a piece of property out of Austin a short distance, called New York Canyon. (I believe I told the story previously about the high grade ore that was taken out of New York Canyon and was pilfered from the mine by my dad's brother-in-law.) Well, this piece of property was owned by a gentleman in Austin, and it was very high grade silver, mostly all chloride silver. This gentleman sent his children to college from ores that he took out of this New York Canyon property. Finally one year, when it came time to do the assessment work, and these children had graduated from school and they were up in hoi polloi, he wanted some help from them either financially or physically to help do this assessment work. They turned the old man down. He became so wrathful about it that he got a hold of Robert Watt, whom he liked very much, and he told Bob, he says, "Bob, I'll sell you the New York Canyon mine for \$1,500."

Bob says, "Well, I haven't got any money." This fellow says, "Well, that's immaterial." He says, "I know that there's ore out there. You can dig it out and pay me, but," he says, "I'm getting to the age where I can't do it. My kids have all turned me down as far as helping me. So," he says, "if you want to take



a crack at it, why, I'll give you a chance to buy the property." So Uncle Bob talked this over with his mother (which is my grandmother) and she grubstaked him. They went out there, and in the seams was this rich chloride silver ore. The fact of the matter is, there used to be a Negro assayer whose name was Henry Berry, and he was over at Cortez. -he nearest assayer at that time was this assayer. They shipped some of these samples over there to have them assayed. They got one high grade assay that this fellow assayed that run better than 18,000 ounces to the ton. Now that just shows you how rich, Of course, it was just a small high grade picked piece of ore, but that was the type of ore that it was.

Well, these cowboys that my uncle got to help him, they didn't like to drill in the hanging wall or the foot wall. So they'd drill right in the vein because that was the softest. They'd put the charges in these veins and they'd blow high grade ore all over the side of the mountain! But even so, it only took one shipment of this high grade ore from him to pay off this fellow as far as this mining property was concerned.

The Watts operated it for quite a few years. Then I think my dad, he leased it from them and finally bought it from them. But anyway, he ended up producing about ten tons of ore that was high graded from him by his own brother-in-law. That's another interesting story in connection with that Watt mine out at New York Canyon.

I'd like to give a little historical background relative to my mother, Helen Louise (Watt) Lemaire. As I stated before, she was born January 26, 1885. She was born and raised at Silver Creek ranch, the home ranch of the Watt family. She attended school, of course, in a little red schoolhouse seven or eight miles north of Silver Creek. She was married to my father, I don't know what month, but she

was only seventeen years old when she got married. Being a very beautiful and attractive girl, of course, she had many suitors during her girlhood days.

There's one thing that I almost forgot to mention about the Watt family out there at Silver Creek. Of course, in those days, they didn't have any radios or television or anything like that, and actually, they had to make their own entertainment. Nearly all the girls were quite musical. They always played some kind of a musical instrument, mostly the piano, and my mother was quite a pianist. She could also play the mandolin real well.

So Silver Creek became quite an area as far as the townspeople were concerned from Austin. They would come out there to visit with the Watt family and enjoy their hospitality, and it was not unusual to sit down to an evening meal or an afternoon Sunday meal when there'd be anywhere from sixteen to twenty-four people out there. But the Watt family loved companionship and loved company, and evidently the company loved the Watt family, because they never hesitated to come out and visit with them whenever the opportunity presented itself.

I was told that my dad was quite a cyclist. He had two or three bicycles. He and his brother Ernest, they bought one of these attachments that fit on the frame of the bicycle. On this little narrow gauge railroad, they attached these extra wheels to their bicycle and they would take off and go clear to Silver Creek station on the Nevada Central railroad "on the rails," and then take the wheels off, and then go on up to Silver Creek and visit with Mother and the other Watt girls. That was quite something in those days.

As I stated before, Mother was quite a talented piano player, and there were many young girls here in this community that she taught how to play the piano. She tried to

teach me, but that was an impossibility for Mother to teach a son how to play a musical instrument. I think I got through the treble clef, but I couldn't get past the bass clef. She and I always got into too big an argument. But she was so talented that when the silent movies first came into Battle Mountain, she used to sit down at the piano and play along with the movies and would fit the musical melodies to fit the pattern of the scenes as they were appearing on the screen, which was of that nature and of that talent that she could improvise and play by ear, and so forth. She did that for many years as far as this local theater was concerned. Of course, when sound track moving pictures came in, she didn't do it any more. She was knocked out of that privilege of playing for those movies.

Locally here, Mother took an active part in all civic affairs. She was very active in the Episcopal Church, became a member of the Ladies Guild here, and was quite an ardent Episcopalian. She was a member of the Parents and Teachers, past president of that organization. She did quite a lot of entertaining here in the home. She had friends all throughout the neighborhood, always listened to their tales of woe and sympathized with them and tried to help them when they were in distress, which is true in a small community. Neighbors will fight like the dickens between themselves, but whenever there is a problem or a distress of one family or one group, the others would, even though they might not be on speaking terms, get together to try to help each other. So that was Mother's nature. She was a very, very talented woman and she died rather young, which was a pretty low blow to my dad, because he worshipped her. The fact of the matter is he only lived two years after she passed away. She passed away in 1935 and he passed away in 1937. So that's a brief story of my mother.

Anybody that would pick on her son (and I was the idol in her heart), she would really bare her fangs and unsheathe her claws and start to work on them if they got too rough with me. I think that's perhaps characteristic of mother love for her one and only child. By the way, being the one and only child, I sometimes have been accused of being a spoiled brat. I don't know whether I've proven it to be so or not, but it's been an interesting life as far as her motherly love for me. I remember when I was just a child (of course, I was more interested in the outdoor activities, and so forth), and it was time to go to bed, she'd always make me say that little prayer, "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep." I don't know whether I'd be so exhilarated with the day's activities or what, but sometimes I would forget some of the wording in that little prayer. Believe me, she wouldn't hesitate to get out that old wooden hairbrush, and she'd keep pounding me until I'd have to remember it, regardless of whether I wanted to or not. But the very fact that she insisted that I take an active part in religious affairs, I think, paid me, in later life, the dividends. As I begin to relate my own life history, I'll prove that point.

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## PIONEERS OF THE LEMAIRE FAMILY OF LANDER COUNTY, NEVADA

Now we're going to discuss the Lemaire grandparents. I have here before me a family register which I believe should be made of record. My grandfather's name was Auguste Désiré Lemaire. You could plainly understand that that's quite French, especially that middle name, Désiré. He was born in France, and the name of the place was called Haut Loquin [Paidon Calais]. I understand that that is some area in Normandy, France. He was born February 6, 1839. He was married on June 28, 1869 to Marie Louise Lucas.

She was born January 26, 1852 at Fausse Pointe, St. Martinville, Louisiana. By that marriage they had five children. The oldest was Louis Aimee Lemaire, and he was born in North Bloomfield, Nevada County, in California on the fifteenth day of March, 1872. The next child was Auguste Charles Lemaire, and he also was born in North Bloomfield, California, on July 4, 1873. In other words, he's a firecracker. My dad, Henry Rene Lemaire, also was born in North Bloomfield, California, on the twenty-fourth day of February, 1875. The fourth child was

Ernest Hubert Lemaire. He was born in Battle Mountain, Lander County, Nevada, on the twelfth day of October, 1877. The fifth child, a girl, was Adele Marie Lemaire, and she was born on the fourteenth day of October, 1883, in Battle Mountain. Three of the children were born in California and two were born in Nevada.

Of these five children there's only one at the moment that's living and that's my Aunt Adele. And, I believe she's residing in Reno. That's the actual family register as far as my grandparents are concerned, and my uncles and one aunt on my father's side of the family.

In getting a sort of a review relative to my grandparents, my grandfather Lemaire left France when he was just a young fellow, at what age I don't know, but he immigrated to Louisiana. Evidently that's where he met and fell in love with my grandmother. Of course, he was adventurous; nevertheless, he specialized in carpentry work. When he was living in Louisiana, he learned the cooperage trade. This cooperage trade gave him the insight in how to curve boards and fit them

tightly together, and so forth. They made these barrels for turpentine and molasses and the like.

Of course, as I said before, he was quite ambitious, and he saved up enough money in Louisiana so that he decided that if he wanted to progress that it would be a good idea for him to take a chance and go to the California gold fields. So after he had saved enough money, why, he got on a boat and sailed from Louisiana down to Panama. He walked across the Isthmus where he took another boat and came up to San Francisco.

When he arrived in San Francisco, he went to one of these hiring halls they had in those days, and he presumably bought himself a job with the only and last gold piece he had in his pocket—I believe it was a twenty-dollar gold piece—and got this card for employment. He had to report to Grass Valley, California.

It took him over a month to go from San Francisco to Grass Valley, California. The reason for it was, of course, two actual reasons. One was the methods of transportation in those days; and number two, evidently he spent his last penny to get this job, so he had to work his way from San Francisco up to Grass Valley.

So after about a month's time when he finally got to Grass Valley, I believe he went to the superintendent of this mine and presented his employment card to the superintendent. The superintendent looked at it and he said, "Well, I'm sorry, but we just don't do business with this hiring hail."

My grandfather had gone to all this trouble to get to the gold fields around Grass Valley, and so he told this superintendent, he said, "Well, I'm going to go to work for you anyhow."

And this superintendent said, "What can you do?"

He said, "Oh, I'll find something. I'll be worth my pay."

So that's what he did. He went to work, and he repaired buildings, and repaired windows, and put in new glass panes, and he repaired porches, and he painted. He was pretty clever at working around places like that, keeping buildings and structures in good condition. So he evidently got on the payroll.

In those days it was difficult to find living accommodations in Grass Valley, so he finally found a vacancy in North Bloomfield. Now I don't know how far that is from Grass Valley, but I don't think it's too far. That's where he made his home. I don't know if he was married in. New Orleans before he left, or whether after he got a job and got situated and located that he got married, but anyway, they got married. As I have given you a little background from the family register, there were three children born there.

As time went on and progressed (it was only a matter of time), of course, in the mining industry, mining is up and it's down. Now whether this particular company got out of the mining business or what, I don't know. But anyway, my grandfather Lemaire had quite a few friends, French people, that lived in Winnemucca, Nevada. In fact, there used to be quite a French colony there. So he decided that he would leave North Bloomfield, and he evidently moved over to Winnemucca.

How long he stayed in Winnemucca, I actually do not know, but eventually he was offered an opportunity to come to Battle Mountain. There was quite a large family here that were pioneers, known as the Blossom family. This particular J. A. Blossom owned quite a lot of business properties here in Battle Mountain. So Grandfather decided that he would take advantage of this opportunity, and so he moved to Battle Mountain.

His first business venture here consisted of a sort of candy or confection store. In those days the smallest piece of money was a twenty-five-cent piece. There wasn't any opportunity for the livestock people or the mining people to jump in an automobile and travel fifty or a hundred miles, and they didn't have any radios or T.V.'s or automobiles to spend their money on, so they had to make their own recreation here in the community. When they would get this small change, why, they would give it to the children in the community. My grandfather was evidently doing quite well in this little confectionery store. This confectionery store was located on the corner of Broad Street and Front Street where at the present time there is a beautiful motel called the Owl Motel. The building that fronted on Front Street, right directly across from the railroad, was made out of adobe brick. Now these adobe bricks were all kiln dried in a brick kiln that was just a short distance north of Battle Mountain. Behind this building he had a residence there, and that's where he and his family lived for several years.

Of course, in those days mining was quite active in Lewis Canyon. At one time, I've been told, there was a population of around anywhere from 7,000-12,000 people. There was Lowertown, Middletown, and Uppertown. And at one time, the Nevada Central Railroad built a spur line that went all the way up to the mouth of Lewis Canyon. So that area was quite active and productive, as far as mineral wealth was concerned. Also, at the same time, there was quite a lot of activity in what is now known as Galena Canyon. And in fact there's a town-site, the town of Galena. I've never been able to find or see a map of that town, but nevertheless there is a town up there called Galena. Well, these mines were quite productive, and actually,

Battle Mountain became the railhead for the southern part of Lander County. Austin was also quite productive at that time.

There were freight lines that were used to bring in supplies and take out supplies and bring in mineral wealth, and so forth, not only in these two large mines, but also from the county seat end of the county. So Grandfather did real well. He was a very thrifty Frenchman and he saved his money.

Directly across the street from Grandfather's store was a fellow by the name of E. B. Williamson, who built quite a large two-story structure. It also was built out of adobe brick, kiln-dried adobe brick. I don't know whether he became ill or whether he wanted to retire or what happened, but anyway, he sold that property to Grandfather Lemaire. Grandfather Lemaire developed quite a large mercantile business on the ground floor and he had some living quarters up above the store. Right adjoining (I think he built that later on), to the north and west of the main structure there, he built additions. That's where they had their living quarters, as their dining area was concerned. But they all slept upstairs in this big two-story adobe brick building.

To the rear of this ground floor store section he had a vault, and in this vault, he kept money for a lot of the ranchers and miners. And that became sort of a depository or a place of safe-keeping for their valuables. As I said before, he built up quite a mercantile business. In fact, you could buy anything from horseshoes and harness to powder and caps and fuse for mining purposes; from railroad spikes to all sorts of women's clothing, hats, and things like that. So you could see, his business was quite diversified. And he used to have a lumberyard that was directly adjoining the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad;



it was on the western end of the present depot. He used to sell quite a lot of lumber, too, in this area.

So it was at this particular point that he built up quite an estate. At one time, it was estimated that his net worth, as far as the mercantile business was concerned, was around about between \$150,900 and \$250,000. Of course, living here as long as he did for so many years, he acquired quite a lot of property; that is, lots and buildings. He built homes for people to Reno, and he owned that whole half-block there where the store is now and quite a few other valuable pieces of property in the town of Battle Mountain.

Naturally, these children of his were given the opportunity of the public school system that existed here at that time. The two elderly uncles, Louis and Augusta, were sent to San Francisco where they attended Heald's Business College and got a background as far as business education, in the way of accounting and stuff like that. And after they returned, my dad and his brother Ernest, they went to San Francisco and took the same course.

It's interesting to know about my uncles. The old one, Louis Lemaire, he, after he came back from San Francisco, was given the opportunity to go into the sheep business. The eldest person of the W. T. Jenkins family—I don't know whether it was w. '2. himself—he started Louis out in the sheep business by giving him 1,500 or 2,000 head of sheep. Sheep in those days weren't worth very much, and he used to run these sheep clear up in and around Jarbidge. Of course, that's a very wonderful summer range for sheep and cattle. He did quite well in that. In fact, he made quite a lot of money. He married a lady by the name of Kate Heflin Lemaire, who is still alive, and she's up in her nineties. He met her when she was teaching school at Lowertown in Lewis

Canyon. She's from Napa, California, and her folks all live down there. Due to the successes he had in the sheep business, he bought quite a bit of orchard areas down in around Napa, California.

By that marriage between Uncle Louis and Aunt Kate, they had two children. One's name is Louis Everett, who is now running the Lemaire Store. His sister Alice, who passed away here several years ago, had married James Bailey. Of course, he's now remarried. James Bailey was quite an athlete. He was involved in teaching. He was elected to the senate in the legislature and has now been given an appointment in the Motor Vehicle Department. So that's a quick rundown on Uncle Louis and his family.

Uncle Auguste Charles, he married a woman by the name of Rose Norris here in Battle Mountain. They had two children. One was named after his father, Auguste, who lived in Reno for quite some time and he had a little grocery store. He worked for Ring-Lee and had a little store down there, and so forth. Then he had a sister named Laverna. Laverna married a gentleman by the name of William Blackwell who used to be the—I don't know whether he was some sort of a dean, but anyway, he had full charge of Lincoln Hall at the University of Nevada. They seemed to be not compatible, so they dissolved their partnership and she got married again, I believe. But they didn't have any children.

Ernest, he had two children, and he married a lady who used to be a teacher here, too. Her name was Caroline Palmer, and she was from Kansas. By that marriage they had two children; one was named Merle and the other is Ernest Charles. Ernest Charles has been the justice of the peace in this community now for pretty close to thirty-five years. When his dad passed away, he was given

the appointment when he was quite a young man, to become the judge of this community. I guess he must have done a pretty good job because he's still judge after about thirty-five years in office.

An interesting little reminiscence here is the very fact that Uncle Louis named his boy Louis, and Uncle Auguste named his boy Auguste, and Uncle Ernest named his boy Ernest. So whenever anybody wanted to describe either Louis, Sr. or Louis, Jr., they never said Louis, Sr. or Louis, Jr.; they said Big Louis and Little Louis. The same thing was true of Auguste, Sr. and Auguste, Jr. It was Big Auguste and Little Auguste. But an oddity of the fact was that both of their children were larger than they were. But as far as saying the size, it meant the Jr. and the Sr. part. And due to the confusion that existed as far as the two uncles, Louis and Auguste, and their two children, Charles adopted the name of E. Charles Lemaire, so he's always been known by the name of E. Charles.

Now my Aunt Adele, she had two children, both girls, and she married a local man here. His name was James Blossom. By that marriage they had two children; one was Louise and the other was Grace. Louise is now passed on, but Grace still alive. She married Fred Altenburg, Jr., and he was killed in an airplane accident just south of Battle Mountain about seven or eight miles. Several years went by and then she married Dale Rose, who was a retired district engineer in connection with the State Highway Department. They are both now living in Winnemucca. So I think that gives a pretty good rundown of all the uncles and my aunt on my father's side of the family.

I would say at the time of the hard winter of '89 and '90, Louis was around about seventeen or eighteen years old. So he could really remember it. He used to tell stories about when that winter finally broke, in the

spring, there had been so much moisture fallen during that winter, all these valleys in this area were practically inundated. Of course, Battle Mountain is located on rather high piece of ground, but you could get in a boat right here on the north edge of town and go clear across the valley to what is known as North Battle Mountain.

When this water was going down the Humboldt and coming down Reese River, these youngsters used to go down on the big bridge that crossed the Humboldt. These cattle carcasses that died during the winter were floating down, and they were all bloated from exposure to the sun, and so forth. And they used to stand on the bridge, and they would shoot these carcasses as they were floating down with a .22 rifle, just to hear the gases whistle out through the openings in their stomachs.

He told us one time that just north of Battle Mountain, down the river, there was a big barn. In this barn, the cattle endeavoring to get out of the severe cold, when the springtime finally came, these cattle had piled one on top of the other, and they were clear up to the rafters in this great big immense barn. The cattle, they chewed the willows clear down just as far as they could for lack of feed because they didn't have much feed. In this whole Humboldt Valley area, the cattle were very much dependent upon the natural grasses and natural vegetation for feed. When this extreme amount of moisture fell in the way of snow and covered up their food, why, they would just eat any darn thing. They would practically eat some of the fence posts to try to keep from starving.

The horses weren't so bad. They were able to survive a lot better for the simple reason that they would paw down to the ground and find something to forage and all. But that was the severity of that winter.

I have previously mentioned my Grandfather Watt was in livestock—sheep and cattle. All of these ranches along this whole Humboldt Valley system, Elko County, northern Eureka County, Lander County, Humboldt County, all of those counties were very severely stricken by this terrible winter. And these livestock producers that were practically very wealthy men, when spring finally came, why, they were just wiped out, as far as their livestock holdings were concerned. Of course, they still had their land holdings, but it was really a rough go for them until they could finally get back on their feet and start producing cattle again. But that's the story of this area, as far as my Uncle Louis used to tell us. He was a young fellow and saw this actually happen.

It's unfortunate that an interview couldn't have been had with my Uncle Louis, who was in his early nineties or late eighties when he passed away, because he had a wonderful memory relative to all these people, and being of an age where he had met most of them, he would have been able to give a pretty close rundown as to their background, and where they came from, and what they did, and how they got started in this area, and so forth.

Here is an interesting story that my uncle used to tell us about. During the early days when the railroad was in its infancy (of course, this was called the Central Pacific), there was two women here who raised large families. One—her name was Lizzie Altenburg, who later married and her name was changed to Morgan—ran the Nevada Hotel. Right adjoining the railroad and close to the depot was this Mrs. Nancy Huntsman, who ran the Capital Hotel. Of course, there wasn't any dining cars in those days and they stopped every so often, just like these buses do now, the Greyhound and continental, and so forth, in order that their passengers could have a food break, coffee break, and so forth. These two

women would go over and meet these trains and they would have different kinds of foods to sell. They specialized in one type of pie, and it was an apple pie. Of course, they had these pieces of pie all cut; the pies were all cut and wrapped in bags, and so forth. It didn't make any difference what these passengers wanted, whether it was peach or apricot, why they had it; but when they opened it up, it was all apple. So they were good sales men. They sold their products by subterfuge. So that was a story that he told years ago.

here's another cute little story that he told, and I always enjoyed hearing it. There was a mine up here, way up at the head of Lewis Canyon. There was a Portuguese who used to run this mine, or owned it, and he had a brother. Of course, the store there at that time was quite active, and they had a large supply of mining supplies and all kinds of groceries, and so forth. This fellow that owned this mine, his name was Tony Angelo.

So one day this brother of his came in the store and he walked up to Uncle Louis and he said, "Mr. Lemaire, I want a big bill of grub for Tony Ang." (He spoke rather broken.)

And so Uncle Louis went and got three or four sales books and sharpened half a dozen pencils and got ready to write up this order and he says, "All right, what is it you'd like to have?"

This fellow says, "I want one big long pair of rubber gum boots."

So Uncle Louis wrote that down. He says, "Okay, what else?"

"That's all."

But Tony Angelo did buy a tremendous amount of mining supplies, and groceries, and so forth, and that's why Uncle Louis got all ready with the big order, and it turned out to be just one big pair of rubber gum boots.

The religious activities here in our community—we had the Catholic religion,



the Episcopal religion, and the Methodist. I think those were the three. My Uncle Louis and his wife were Methodists and the rest of the family were also almost all Protestants. However, my Aunt Adele, she was Catholic.

The Lemaire family played quite an important part and activity in fraternal orders. The upper story of this A. D. Lemaire and Sons building, as it was later called, had a large hall. It was the only accommodation that the town or community had to take care of civic activities of any consequence. So my grandfather Lemaire, a big French Huguenot, he was quite interested in fraternal orders. He was a charter member of the Masonic order in this community. The Masons held their meetings in this upstairs hall. The Odd Fellows were also active at that particular time and they held their meetings there, and the Knights of Pythias. Of course, the women's organizations, they came along later—Eastern Star and Rebeccas, and so forth. But that hall was a wonderful asset to the community. There's still the bell that was used to notify lodge members that there was a meeting that night; that's still there. That bell was also used as a fire warning for the community. You can see it from the Owl Motel. If you look up the stairs, you'll see this bell up there. So that's part of the story of the civic activities.

Of course, there wasn't any parents and teachers organizations in those days, but it gives you an idea of the fraternal and religious organizations that were in existence at that particular time in a community.

In this same hall, they had masquerades every year, and some of the makeups were really quite outstanding. I don't think they imported any music. I think all their music they worked out themselves with their own talents.

I know I was just a small child, I think about five or six, and my mother was a very

accomplished musician as far as being able to play the piano. She trained me to sing a vocal number, either Fourth of July or Labor Day or some graduation exercise. When it came my turn to go up on the little stage that they had in this hall, I, of course, was sitting up in one of the front row seats as one of the entertainers. Mother gave me the nod, So I walked up and got up on the stage and I started to sing before she even got to the piano, So she finally asked me, "Well, wait a minute, wait for me, dear, and I'll accompany you." So I got through that all right. I think the piece that I sang was "I've Got the Mumps." I think that was the first number that I ever Rendered as a vocal number before any audience of any size.

The Chinese at one time were quite a prominent factor here in the community. They had a little settlement of their own. It was located just south and a little bit east of our present post office and in back of what is now the Commercial Hotel. The way they lived in those days was pretty much in—well, more like a root cellar, underground areas, houses. Then they would celebrate their Chinese New Year, why, the young fellows here would get ahold of as many firecrackers as they possibly could. Of course, it was no effort at all to walk up on top of these underground adobe huts or adobe cellars. They'd light these giant firecrackers and throw them down the chimneys. And golly! These Chinamen would come a-booming out from underground just like people coming out of some of those places in New York, those underground railroads. But quite an interesting part of our community was these Chinese people that lived here.

I don't know how they came to be in this area unless at one time they worked over around Cortez, the mine of Cortez. Either that, or they were men that had worked to build the railroad through this area. I knew the

youngsters here in the community. According to what my dad used to tell me, they used to go down here at Humboldt River and catch these carp and they'd sell these carp to these Chinese, who evidently liked fish very much; sell these carp to these Chinese for about fifty cents apiece. A lot of these young fellows, they made pretty good spending money by going down to the Humboldt River catching these carp and selling them to the Chinamen.

Here's an interesting historical note that might be of interest to somebody sometime. I don't know what the fellow's name was that owned the Cortez mine, whether it was a company, a corporation, or whether he was just the manager, or whether he personally owned it. But this Cortez property was very high grade silver ore. This fellow that was operating this mine was evidently operating on a shoestring. The miners would work for him, but due to the fact that he couldn't pay when paydays came due, they all quit. In those days, also, the railroad was being built, and these Chinese, they loved to gamble and speculate, so he didn't have any trouble. He got all these Chinese to work for him to do this mining for him. It was only a few months that he hit a very, very rich deposit of this silver ore and he was able to pay all these Chinese. And due to the fact that they was willing to gamble with him, he always had a soft spot in his heart for these Chinese.

There's a little camp called Lander. Now, that's across the valley on the west side of Crescent Valley. There was quite a lot of activity in that community there. That was a mining area. I was over there one time and I went into one of these dugout cellars and I found all kinds of these earthen bottles of—I think the Chinese used it for this soy sauce. Of course, they probably had a lot of other stuff in those bottles, too, but it was an interesting experience for me to run across these old

things. And that was way back in the '70s and '80s, a long time ago.

The attitude of the people of our community to these various races, colors, and creeds was they didn't pay too much attention to them. They felt as long as these people that were here were peace-loving people, when they minded their own business, and so forth, why, they were accepted in the community. There was no one that was judged by his outward appearance as to whether he was a good person or a bad person, or anything like that. But once they proved themselves to be either bad or good, if they were good, why, they became part of the community, but if they proved themselves bad, why, the people of the community would not have anything to do with them at all.

I've noticed that in a lot of mining areas. I lived in Tonopah, and spent some time in Ely, and so forth, and people of those communities, they accept even strangers coming into the area. As long as those strangers prove themselves to be good citizens, why, they're accepted and become part of the community. But if they're not good citizens, why, then, boy, they just will not have anything to do with them. That's the truth as far as any of these communities up and down the main line of the Southern Pacific. In the later years now, we've had such an influx of people from other states, and drifters, nearly all the people here as a good citizen. He owned property, paid taxes, sent his kids to our public schools. There wasn't any arguments or disturbances whatsoever, like there is in some of our large metropolitan areas today.

When I was a young fellow, a young kid going to school, my pal and playmate was a full-blooded Shoshone Indian. His name was Willie Joaquin. But in those days there wasn't any Indian village like we have today. The government didn't take care of

the Indians in those days like they are doing at the moment. So there's quite a few of the Indians that had bought their own lots, and secured their own housing, and were part of the community to the extent that they're not living off the government. Of course, now, nearly all the Indians that are in this community, the womenfolk of those Indians usually do housework and a lot of the maid service around the motels. They're very, very capable in that category of work. The men, they usually work as common laborers and work around some of these cattle ranches, handling livestock and things like that. But they have quite a few children right here. Now you take this Indian woman that comes in about once a week and helps my wife here. Her name is Mary Knight. She has six children, and she's meticulous when it comes to housework.

By the way, years ago when we were taking care of my oldest daughter's children, when she passed away, we had this little Indian girl Mary. She stayed right here in our home, and we helped send her through school. She graduated from the local high school and she's a very fine, capable person. She doesn't talk much, but she sure works a lot. And having lived here before, naturally she knows every inch and crook and cranny of this big house. She can really go at it and get the job done. She does very fine work.

My father and his brother, Ernest, they detested indoor work. They liked to work on buildings and paint and build, and so forth, and consequently, they were quite an asset to my grandfather A. D. Lemaire in maintaining, keeping in livable condition, all of these homes or houses that he had for Reno in the community. So there is always some asset that a person has if he can just find the answer to it.

My dad loved politics. He became a Lander County commissioner; I've forgotten

which year. I don't know whether he served one four-year term or two two-year terms, but it was during his term in office they built this steel bridge that crosses the Humboldt River, which is quite a boon to the community and also to the people that lived on the other side of the river during the high water period.

He also served as a member of the school district here, called the Battle Mountain School District, and that comprised an area twenty miles square, which would be about four hundred square miles. It was during his term in office as a member of that board that they bonded the school district for \$30,000 and built this present building that is now owned by the county. It's located on Third and Humboldt Street. That was put up in 1916. Along with him on that board of trustees was a gentleman by the name of Henry Starrett and a gentleman by the name of A. G. MacAllan.

The local taxpayers were so disturbed about the fact that these trustees were going to build this expansive \$30,000 building, they were going to launch a recall petition and have these trustees removed from office. My dad was pretty much like a duck; he didn't pay much attention to it and let all this severe criticism roll off his back just like water does on a duck's back. He told me one day, he said, "I wouldn't be surprised if it would be less than ten years and they'll be building another building." It was less than four, and they built the high school building. So he was right.

Of course, he served as the county assessor here in Lander County for seventeen years. That's what I said; he was always active in politics, and quite active civically, and so forth, as well as being interested in mining. I evidently come by my politics by my natural throw-down.

He had one very serious controversy. In fact, he had two or three of them. One

occurred wherein my dad assessed a fellow by the name of Pat Welch in the southern end of Lander County. They carried that problem clear to the tax commission of the state. He had another go-around with a fellow by the name of George Russell who was a cattle baron in this particular area. George Russell owned the Russell Land and Livestock Company. He owned these large holdings north of Battle Mountain which is far from the truth; he was just acting as an arbitrator to try to get their differences solved and bring it somewhere into reasonable perspective. Due to the fact that Dad was in this position, Governor Dickerson became quite angry with him.

The main meeting place in Carson in those days was the old Arlington Hotel. Dad walked in there one day—into this bar—and the governor was buying the drinks for some of his friends, and he intentionally excluded my dad. So Dad, he looked at the pictures on the wall, and he spent quite a little time until he got all through. Finally, when they finished that drink, why, my dad walked up to the bar and he says, “Now I’m going to buy a drink, and I want everyone in this room to have a drink except one man,” and he pointed at the governor.

The governor became quite angry, and he didn’t say anything, but he walked out of the bar. After he had left, my dad bought another drink. During the course of the second drink, Governor Dickerson walked into the saloon. My dad turned around and saw him and he says, “Gentlemen, a certain person just walked into this barroom and he is packing a gun. And regardless of that fact,” he says, “I want everyone in this room to have a drink except that man.”

My dad stood right out in the open, and if the governor had wanted to shoot him, he could have very easily. The truth of the matter

was he was armed, and why he should have done a thing like that, Dad couldn’t figure out. Nevertheless, Dad called his bluff. So after that episode passed, why, my dad had sort of forgotten it. But later on in 1910, the governor decided that he would take after my dad and beat him at an election. So up here in this Lemaire’s Hall, Dickerson was campaigning, and he had the lieutenant governor candidate and all the other state officials with him. He got up on this stand, and my dad was standing way in the back of the room, and I guess Dickerson really verbally just tore my dad all to pieces, how he was tied in with the utilities, and so forth.

When he finally sat down, my dad walked up the aisle, got up on the stand, and he said to the audience, “Ladies and gentlemen, I was practically born and raised in this community, and you have known my past record and my complete history, and,” he said, “as far as the remarks that have been made by the governor here this evening,” he says, “they’re a complete falsehood.” He said, “When you go to the polls this coming November, all I ask you to do is to remember this: Either he’s a liar or I’m a liar.” And he walked off the stand. My dad beat his opponent—I think it was about twenty to one, proving that this type of campaign was not very ethical.

But later on my dad told me, Governor Dickerson, after he had found out the type of a man my dad was in his sincere efforts and endeavors to try to bring this big battle to some kind of a conclusion, he realized that he had made a mistake and he wrote to my dad and apologized. He met my dad on several occasions and apologized to him personally, publicly, and every other way, but he had built up such a resentment in my dad’s mind that he never forgave him for it. So that’s the history as far as my dad’s problems in connection with his political aspirations. Of course, being

in politics like he was, he got to know such out standing people as Senator Key Pittman, Tasker L. Oddie, all those men that were on a national level as far as representatives of the state.

He told me one story that was quite interesting about when Senator Key Pittman first ran for office. You can tell that politics doesn't change much, because you can see your everyday politician, whenever they come into a community, they always carry a little black book in which they made notes to be sure and see this person, be sure and see that person, and so forth. Well, way back, many, many years ago, that's when they first started to use that little black book to be sure and go see certain people. Key Pittman, he was not very wealthy, and the fact of the matter is he probably borrowed enough money to campaign on. He came to Battle Mountain and he wondered up and down the streets looking for Henry Lemaire, because he had been given his name, to be sure and look up Henry Lemaire when he came to Battle Mountain. He finally found him, and he was in this corner saloon. This saloon used to be where the Owl Motel is right now. That used to be quite a haven for all the politicians. My dad was in there visiting with some of his friends, and Key Pittman walked in and, "Is Henry Lemaire here?" he asked the bartender.

The bartender said, "Yes, he's down there visiting with those three or four men there at the end of the bar." So he went down and introduced himself.

And evidently my dad had been told about Key Pittman, and he was very happy to see him. So they shook hands, and after Key had introduced himself, Key says, "Well, I'd like to buy a drink."

Dad says, "Well, if you want, you can buy a drink, but," he says, "if you want to win this election, you've got to get votes. I'm going to

get some of the local people in here so I can introduce you to them." So my dad walked out the front door and he hollered up and down the street, he said, "I have Key Pittman, candidate for the United States Senate in here, and he wants to buy us all a drink."

Key Pittman told me this himself. Key said, "You know, I went in there with the thought in mind that I'd buy three or four fellows a drink and that would be it, but before your dad got through," he said, "I had to buy about forty drinks. But," he said, "I sure carried Battle Mountain." He said, "I won Battle Mountain hands down, thanks to your dad. And," he said, "he was really quite an ardent campaigner." So I think that gives you a pretty good rundown as to my dad's political back ground.

A funny thing happened. Remember those good old swinging doors there at the Golden Hotel in Reno? My dad was standing out there talking to a group of men one day, and these fellows all had known my dad practically all his life, and they criticized my dad very severely. They said, "Henry, why don't you ever run for some high office on the state level?" They said, "You could have won it hands down. You are widely known. You have that wonderful personality." And they said, "You could have really gone to town if you would have gone for some high state official." That they meant, whether it was governor or something like that, I don't know, maybe United States Senator.

But my dad said, "No, I've always been very happy in my present status as far as taking part in politics." And he said, "I'm satisfied." He said, "I know the responsibilities of state offices, and I don't think I'm qualified to take on that responsibility," which was quite open-minded and frank about what he thought about his own capabilities. That was his thinking.



Like I stated before, my dad was always very much interested in mining activities. He and his two brothers, Louis and Auguste, had acquired this Gweenah property, which is about seven or eight miles north of Austin in some low hills near Ledlie. During the depression we were badly in debt to the Battle Mountain State Bank, and when the banks closed, naturally the banks all called their loans and we had to get some money fast. We didn't know where to get it. We tried to put up a piece of property valued at \$20,- or \$90,000 and borrow \$5,000, and couldn't even borrow that much. So when visiting at home one evening, my dad and I were talking about selling these mining holdings that he still had, and he mentioned this Gweenah. He said, "I think there's a good chance that you might be able to find some pretty good ore out there, so why don't you and I go out there and take a look."

So we drove out there, and we did take a look, and there was ore showing that looked promising. Of course, in our business at that particular time, we always had a very good business in the summertime when the tourism was on, but in the wintertime, we'd always go behind. In other words, we'd make good money in the summer, and then it would ease it up in the winter. We thought if there was a possibility that we could find, by a gamble, some ore in this property, it'd pay us to go out there and take a chance.

So Don Sumin, one of the young fellows that worked for us, and I moved out to Gweenah. I had never had any mining experience, and Don had worked some in mines in Utah and around Ely. So we had a small knowledge of doing some timbering and how a mine should be run, So between the two of us, we put some skids down the shaft, and timbered the shaft, and got it in operating order, and we started to work on

this vein. Thank goodness, this vein turned out to be not only promising, but it was very good. It was shortly after Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President, and he gave the responsibility of earmarking the price of silver to his good friend, Senator Key Pittman.

Now when we went out to Gweenah to start the mine, and this was a silver mine, the price of silver was around thirty-eight cents. And while we were digging out this first shipment—cold, miserable weather, goodness, digging this first shipment out; I think it was in March—the price of silver was raised to about seventy-five or seventy-four cents. Senator Key Pittman, if he had wanted to, could have raised the price of silver to \$1.29.

This statement that I'm going to make is not based on fact; it's just based on my thinking. I have always thought (and Senator Key Pittman was a good friend of mine), honestly and sincerely believe that as far as he's concerned, the silver issue relative to its price structure was always a political football, and it was that political football that the honorable Senator Key Pittman used to continue to be reelected by the people of the state of Nevada. Now that's my own thinking, and it might not be based on fact, but it's my thinking. I do believe that when the President of the United States gave him full authority to establish a price of silver, he could have put a much higher valuation on it, but even then, having jumped the price from thirty-eight cents to seventy-four cents, it was a godsend to the Lemaire, because we realized a fairly large sum of money for that first shipment. And the following winter we did the same thing. We'd work out at the mine during the winter, work at the service station in the summer, go back out at the mine in the winter, and in two or three winters we realized enough money out of shipments from that particular mine

to pay off the mortgage, or pay off the Battle Mountain State Bank. And that's the way we kept our Lemaire holdings intact. Otherwise, if they had had to sell those properties, the Lemaire family would have been long gone by this time. That's an interesting part of that Gweenah story.

Of course, my dad was quite interested in the Copper Queen property, which is adjoining the now present holdings of the Duval Corporation, and that's under option to them. They have been doing quite a bit of drilling up there on the Copper Queen to determine the extent of the ore bodies on the property. That their findings will result in, I don't know. Time will tell. So outside of politics and mining, that's about the highlights of my dad's activities in Lander County.

I would like to give a little analysis of my dad's personality. Of course, I get quite enthusiastic over trying to describe his personality, and I just don't know the adjectives to use. All I can say is that, regardless of how black the clouds—it didn't make any difference of how everything looked as far as bad—why, he would always look on the good side of life. It was his optimism and his viewpoints of life that meant so much as far as his success was concerned, and his friendships that he built up over the years. Tie had a wonderful faith in human beings. If you proved to him your worthiness as far as a friend, why, you were his friend for life.

During the years that he was a Ford dealer—and, by the way, my dad was a Ford dealer commencing in 1910, April. Of course, the Ford agency has been in our family ever since then. It's the oldest Ford agency now in the Salt Lake district, and I believe that there are only two other agencies west of the Mississippi River that are older than this in fifty years. He was a Ford dealer in 1910, and it's still held in the family, and this is

'67—that's fifty-seven years. We had been connected with the Ford family and the Ford organization for that long, which is quite a historical fact, too. I remember, just as a young fellow, my dad when he was selling the old Model T Fords, there would be mining men, prospectors, fellows out here working in the hills, they'd come in and they would say to my dad, "Now, Henry, I have to have a pickup." And, of course, in those days you could buy a Ford Model T pickup for around about five or six hundred dollars. Now you can't buy them for less than \$2,400 or \$2,600.

Then my dad said, "Well, where are you mining?"

"Well, I'm working up here in a property out of Copper Canyon." Or, "I'm working up here in a property out of Mill Creek," or someplace in that area.

My dad would say, "how does it look?"

Of course, these fellows that were working in these underground workings, they would be very optimistic, too, and they'd say, "Well, all I need is a pickup to help get this show on the road as far as this mine, and if you will let me have a pickup, I'll pay you just as soon as I make my first shipment."

And believe it or not, my dad at one time had about fifteen or twenty customers on his books which they had never put a penny down to buy an automobile or a pickup truck. Now, that's how trusting he was. I don't believe that in all of his history as a businessman in connection with selling Ford automobiles that he ever lost a penny on any one of those people that brought those vehicles from him—which is remarkable. That was his faith and confidence in people.

However, anyone, as far as he was concerned, that did him wrong, he would never trust them again. He said, "Only a fool trusts a man a second time after he has given him a bad time." So that was him.

A funny thing, too, some of these customers that came to my dad would have a very ill reputation as far as their willingness to pay the bills. But my dad never listened to any of this criticism that he would hear relative to some of these customers that would eventually drift into his place of business. He always judged a person by how they treated him, not what was told about them by others, which was a wonderful tribute to his belief in human beings. I admired him for that. When I think of this wonderful trait—the just-hearsay criticism of a person, he didn't believe that. But believe me, if that person ever did him something wrong, then he was off of them just like a dirty shirt. He never had anything more to do with them. Now, that was it.

In giving some of the background of my father, I overlooked one or two important features about him. He was quite an athlete. He played a lot of baseball; he was interested in all kinds of sports. I don't know what position he played on the Battle Mountain baseball team, but he was quite active in that area of sports. On top of that, he was a very ardent hunter. He loved to hunt and he participated in a lot of trap shoots. In fact, I have two or three medals that he acquired at some of these trap shoots that took place in the state of Nevada.

Another very interesting story—I think I mentioned about how he courted my mother by getting an attachment and attaching it on his bicycle and going from Battle Mountain clear to the Silver Creek switch [on the railway tracks]. But here is one of his accomplishments that I overlooked. I don't know what year it was, but it was long before there were any roads of consequence, or any highways, or any automobiles. The Hearst newspapers in San Francisco promoted a relay bicycle race from San Francisco to New York City. They broke the entire distance up into

segments of anywhere from thirty to forty miles, and they got expert cyclists to carry this message, and they usually went in teams. The one that came into this area and sponsored securing the necessary cyclists was a fellow by the name of William Rishell. This fellow Rishell later on became the managing force of the Utah State Automobile Association. His main headquarters, of course, were in Salt Lake City, but he came out to Battle Mountain and made arrangements with my dad and my Uncle Louis for these two segments. My dad—and I don't know who his companion was, but their segment was from Golconda to Battle Mountain. My uncle's segment was from Battle Mountain to a little place called Beowawe, which is near the railroad. Then Mr. Rishell, he was pretty smart, he and his companion, they had these attachments on their bicycle, and so they rode the rails with their bicycle units from Beowawe, I think, to Elko. He was pretty clever. As far as choosing the worst part of this segment in this area, he gave that to some, just to some friends like my dad and my Uncle Louis.

So my dad, in his trip from Golconda to Battle Mountain, believe it or not, he came across the Golconda summit where the present Interstate 80 highway is today. It was so rough going that they had to push their bicycles part of the way and ride part of the way, and coming up over that Golconda summit, why, this fellow that was with him, he didn't have the strength that my dad had, and when they finally got down on this side, he gave out. My dad couldn't leave him there in the middle of the desert, so he knew that there was a section house and some section men working on the railroad at a place called Iron Point, which was just about a mile or a mile and a half from the base of this Golconda hill. so my dad loaded this fellow on his bicycle and took him all the way up to Iron



Point and arranged that he would have a place to stay, get some food, water, and get in the shade out of the sun. Then my dad came on into Battle Mountain; and that trip was very overexerting. My dad in later years told me that that particular trip, he said, "I probably never should have done it because I paid for it in my later years. My legs, every once in awhile and even now, give out on me." And that was many, many years ago.

That was an experience that he had, and for that, his record, as far as what he had to go through to carry that relay message from Golconda to Battle Mountain, the Hearst newspapers had a front page article with a picture (drawing) of him, and they also gave him a bronze medal showing a picture of a cyclist on it. We still have the medal, but the article that was in this San Francisco Examiner, we lost that during the flood that occurred about two or three years ago. It was in storage in our basement. So that was another feat—what I always considered an important feat—that he performed as a young man and proved besides the fact that even though he was an active and a very ardent politician, he had other attributes, too.



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## MY STORY—EARLY LIFE AND CAREER; BUSINESS AND CIVIC LIFE IN BATTLE MOUNTAIN

It's a strange thing about my own personality and makeup— I like to talk about other people, but it's difficult for me to talk about myself. But inasmuch as it's the desire of this research interview to learn as much as they possibly can about my past life from infancy on up, I will try to give as much of it as I possibly can, and as truthfully as I possibly can.

I was born in 1903, on October fifteenth. I was born here in Battle Mountain. Believe it or not, right where this nice large home is at the moment, there used to be a one-story structure. That structure is just directly across the street. That used to be where this home is now. I was born in that one-story structure. The doctor that was in attendance at my birth, according to my birth certificate, was Dr. George A. Pope. He was the resident physician here in Battle Mountain. The nurse for the occasion was Elizabeth Morgan. If it hadn't been for the fact that those two people were the ones at my birth, I would have had a difficult time of getting a birth certificate. In those days, they didn't keep a record, and

there wasn't a localized place, as far as the state was concerned, to keep records of births and marriages and all the statistics. Consequently, when World War II came along and I had to prove that I was born, Dr. Pope was still alive and we was able to get an affidavit from him, as well as from this nurse, that I had been born on a certain date. He did have, evidently, some office records of his own, so that was finally recorded and became a public fact. So I was finally brought into the United States legally!

As I stated before, I went to school in elementary education and high school education in the local public schools. have a picture someplace showing me when I was in the first grade. Mother always dressed me up ridiculously (as I thought) and in this group picture of the whole school—I think there was not over thirty or forty students, and that consisted of the entire enrollment—she had me dressed with one of these sailor hats and a sort of little sailor suit with knee breeches, and I really looked ridiculous compared with a lot of the other kids that were in those similar grades at that particular time, because

they were all dressed in levis. They were more typically dressed to the way of life of the community than I was. It looked like I was a city dude, and I always detested that picture. I have it someplace.

But anyway, when I graduated from the elementary grades into high school, I was amused; when I received my diploma, it stated on the diploma, "Miss Rene Lemaire, she is entitled to enter into any high school in the state of Nevada." So the superintendent of schools, evidently he was confused about my name, too.

My first teacher was Eliza Pierce. We now have in Battle Mountain at the present time an elementary school that has been dedicated to her memory. She served as a teacher in this area for many, many years. The fact of the matter is, when my dad was either in the eighth or ninth grade here in the local school was when she first started to teach school.

Another incident that I overlooked was the fact that Dr. Peter Frandsen (at the University of Nevada), the first school that he ever taught was this little red schoolhouse out of Silver Creek, and he stayed at Silver Creek [ranch]. That was where he lived during the time that he was teaching.

I remember a hygiene class under him when I went to the University of Nevada, and I figured, oh, goodness, I'll be able to get high marks here because he was a friend of the family's, and taught my mother, and so forth. Of all the classes that I attended at the University, I think the lowest grades I ever got was in Peter Frandsen's class. I just had to work like the dickens in order to survive. So I didn't get any special favors from him at all. (That's just a little incident.)

I graduated from high school here in 1922, I believe it was; I graduated from grammar school in '17, graduated from high school in '21, and went to the University of Nevada.

I went one semester, and when I was at the University, there was a feud on between the north and south even then as there is today, and due to politics, it ended up I was elected president of the freshman class. My secretary was a young fellow whose father was the superintendent of the Salt Lake division of the Southern Pacific railroad, and his name was John Martin Luther Stubbs Fulton, Jr. He was my secretary-treasurer of the freshman class.

Of course, in those days there was quite an activity of hazing and the old things that had to be done. There was the freshman hay ride and then they had a problem of putting posters up on the campus. The sophomores were all with the seniors, and the freshmen were with the juniors. On one particular hay ride, out to Moana Springs (and the Berrums were the ones that owned the place), of course, being the freshman president, I was supposed to be one of the outstanding leaders. We went out there; we really had a battle royal with the sophomore class. There was a lot of egg throwing and apple throwing, a lot of windows broken, and I think about two or three hundred dollars worth of damage done.

And a funny thing happened; the president of the sophomore class was the gentleman from Yerington that runs a newspaper, Walter Cox, but anyway, it ended up that I had him tied up in a root cellar under full control. We finally called off this big battle that took place. This John Martin Luther Stubbs Fulton, Jr. was rather a sissified boy, young man, and these sophomores got him and broke a whole case of eggs over him one at a time. And if you didn't think he was a mess! Anyway, the freshmen then raised the money to pay off all the damages that were done at the Moana Hot Springs.

So I went one semester and darn near flunked out, due to my activities in connection with being president of the class and being

initiated into a local fraternity called the Links and Shield, which later on became the Sigma Phi Sigma. So I stayed out of college for about a year, and I went back for a year and a half. My ambition was to become a chemist. I loved that. I was working for a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry, but my folks here at home were going in debt to put me through school, and the last semester I was down there, I don't believe I hardly opened up a book, and yet I got better grades than I had in any of the other previous semesters. I felt rather guilty about it, so I decided that I would quit school for awhile and maybe get my feet on the ground.

During my [1924] semester at school I came home one weekend. I had always been quite active in playing basketball, so they had me referee a basketball game between Elko and Battle Mountain. In this particular game the Battle Mountain High School team, it just seemed like there wasn't anything they could do that was wrong. Everything they did was perfect. They were playing wonderful teamwork. Even the guards, they could shoot from practically any position on the floor and never miss the basket. Elko got very disturbed about it, and so they began razzing me, as the referee, that I wasn't calling the fouls properly on the Battle Mountain team, which wasn't true. But anyway, Battle Mountain really beat the socks off of Elko. On that tour that the Elko team made, they played, I think, three games, and they never won a game, but the worst trouncing they got was here in Battle Mountain.

A fellow by the name of Al Cahlan was the editor for the Elko Free Press, which was owned and controlled by a gentleman by the name of E. M. Steninger in Elko. He was quite an ardent basketball fan, and to protect the glory of the Elko team, he wrote a very vicious article in the El/co Free Press paper.

It was quite upsetting to the people here in Battle Mountain. They thought that he should be criticized for it, so they passed the hat and raised seven or eight hundred dollars, and with my sanction, they hired a fellow by the name of Cliff Robbins who was an attorney in Winnemucca- And we filed suit against the Elko paper for \$5,000, which seemed to me to be a ridiculous thing, because it didn't bother me very much, but, nevertheless, the suit was filed. The attorney for the defendant was Mr. Douglas A. Castle. After about a year and a half or two years, the action finally came before the court. There was a jury trial and the presiding judge was Judge Orr (I think he was from Pioche). It was very interesting and amusing to me.

The coach for the Battle Mountain team was a fellow by the name of W. V. Hollan. He was the coach, and I think he was also the principal of the schools here at that time. When we were in the witness stand, we just went ahead and told them the story as we saw it, but every one of the players on the Elko team got up and they gave a repeat testimonial that sounded like a bunch of parrots because every one said exactly the same thing and used the same expressions in their whole testimony, and when it finally went to the jury, they were not out very long. They came back and their decision was that the article was libelous and that the paper was guilty of publishing a libelous article.

Then, of course, it came to the problem of damages. Due to the family name of Lemaire, or whatever the case might have been, they stipulated that the damages were practically nil, and that I was only entitled to nominal damages of just one dollar. Somewhere in my collection I've got this dollar that was given to me as damages for this lawsuit.

But a strange thing happened. Mr. Steninger was really upset that the people of

Elko County felt that way, and the decision was made not against the paper so much as it was a decision made against Mr. Cahlan. Evidently during the years that he had worked for Mr. Steninger, he had penned some very vicious articles about different ones in the county and the community. Mr. Steninger felt that it was only appropriate, inasmuch as the decision that was made was not only a slam at the paper, but it was also a slam at this fellow Cahlan, so I think he let Cahlan go. It was a lucky thing for Mr. Cahlan, because he moved to Las Vegas, and he got there at an early hour in the phenomenal growth of that area, and he became a very wealthy person. I think he became interested in the Review-Journal newspaper, and he was interested in a lot of real estate transactions. I think he was also interested in some kind of a gravel-producing project in which he made quite a lot of money using this gravel for building construction and things like that. But anyway, it was to his advantage that he actually moved out of Elko. It was not known, of course, that things would happen like that, but it was very beneficial for him. That's the story of the basketball lawsuit.

One thing happened in my lifetime that I've never forgotten. I almost lost my life on the occasion—it was years ago. We used to have a very fast horse racetrack here in the southwest part of the community, and that particular area now is being occupied by the Bureau of Land Management in their housing development, and this oval racetrack was about one mile long. And one year they—the community here—decided to put on this Labor Day celebration and they decided they'd have this automobile race. They invited the different ones who thought that they were speed demons and who thought that they could provide some sort of amusement to the people of the community by entering some kind of hot rods, and they would have this

five-mile race. So, we had a mechanic working for us in our garage. His name was Jurey. Joe Jurey. He and his brother entered this Ford that they had stripped down and they had put special timing gears in it and tried to increase the speed. He began bragging around that he was going to win this race. happened to have an old Ford that was quite ancient and my dad says, "Son, why don't you fix up this old Ford and enter it against this fellow, Jurey?"

And I says, "Well, what do you think I ought to do?"

He says, "I think you ought to grind the valves, and maybe put on a couple of new tires in the rear and put on new bucket seats. When we get ready to run it, you can put some castor oil in the engine." This castor oil is a lubricant that was used quite often in the lubrication of aircraft engines to give them additional compression. It's a vegetable oil and it does have a tendency to give you a lot more compression.

On the day of the Labor Day celebration, everybody went out to watch these contestants in this race, and there were four of them. My cousin, Louis Lemaire, had a stripped-down Ford but it was a rather heavy body, so it wasn't as fast as these two vehicles, one driven by Jurey and one driven by myself. There was a fellow by the name of Frank Silvera. He had a Maxwell and he had taken the top off of it. He thought that would give it additional speed. He took the windshield off, too. These curves around the track, with the wind blowing sixty miles an hour, naturally, you might have a tendency to skid. And in order to get better traction, why, this fellow Silvera put some cement inside on the left-hand side of his car because it was a left-hand operated race. We went around counter-clockwise. The first turn he made with this Maxwell, all the sacks of cement slid over to the opposite side. The back end of his car really looked ridiculous.

It was a five-mile race and they didn't have any checkered flags or any signal system to let you know what lap it was. I thought it was quite exciting. I was only about fifteen or sixteen years old. The gentleman who rode with me was named Alfred Uren, of the Uren family here in Battle Mountain, which is an old Cornish family. He worked at the express company, Railroad Express. And when I wanted to get someone to ride with me he volunteered.

Each of these four contestants started out fifteen seconds apart. I was last. First was this Maxwell, and then my cousin, and then Jurey, and then myself. Well, they timed us around each lap, and it was supposed to be on a time basis rather than on one fellow trying to get ahead of the other. This fellow, Silvera, he eventually had to drop out because his vehicle was absolutely too slow and he wasn't making any time at all. I think that on the third lap, this Ford that my cousin Louis was driving developed some kind of engine trouble. So the fourth and fifth laps was a real showdown contest between Joe Jury and me. This Ford that I drove was really quite alive. Any time you gave it the throttle on the steering gear quadrant, it just seemed to jump right out from under you. I think at the end of the fourth lap I was about fourteen seconds behind Jurey, and at the end of the fifth lap I was only three or four seconds behind him, eating this terrific dust that this track was throwing up with these speeding automobiles. I would have won the race right then if they had stopped it; why, everything would have been secure. But Jurey turned around and saw that I kept coming, and I saw that he was still going so I figured that there must be another lap to go, so I started around this track again, and on the last curve, I took the outside of the track and this fellow that was with me, Alfred, says, "Go ahead. Pass him. Pass him."

About halfway around the curve, my rear wheels was right up practically even with his—that is, parallel, and my front wheels was parallel to his rear wheels. And when we got out into the straightaway, we were even, wheel for wheel. And Joe's brother, who was riding with him, Lester Jurey, was watching us and kept telling Joe, "They're going to pass us. They're going to pass us." And Joe didn't know whether I was going to pass him on the inside of the track or the outside of the track, and he naturally presumed that I was going to pass on the inside of the track, so he began crowding over to the right side of the track and our wheels rubbed. So rather than have the two racing cars tangle and go end over end, I took to the sagebrush. Well, out in that area, there is these large, high sagebrush hummocks, and as I went out through these hummocks, why, one place there, this Ford that I was driving, it took off into the air and when it came down, it landed on its two front wheels and it threw me out about forty feet ahead of the vehicle. The impact pulled the seat clear off the car, and it bent this Model "T" wishbone—it practically bent it double. It bent the axle and it tore a wheel and the rim clear off of the wooden rim on one side, and this other side, it tore the tire and the tube off of it, and it came down and this fellow, Alfred Uren who was on his back, and it just practically ripped all of the flesh off of the calf of his leg. And naturally the water was boiling, and he thought it was on fire, and it was dusty and everything. So fortunately, he did have the presence of mind to crawl away from the car. But the last thing I remember, I thought to myself, "If horses bucked like this car was bucking, there would be darn few buckeroos."

And when I woke up—it knocked me out—and when I woke up, the doctor was working on me in the doctor's office. And that was Dr. S. R. Clark. He was pulling



greasewood slivers out of the side of my face and out of my eyelids, and so forth. And everybody thought that I was in bad shape, but when I regained consciousness and I was cleaned up a little bit, why, I didn't feel too bad. They thought that maybe I might be hurt internally, but I wasn't. But this poor fellow, Alfred Uren, why, he was around town here for several months on crutches. And that was quite an experience for me as far as my ability to operate a racing car. I used to have a complete record of the various speeds of the various vehicles that were entered in this race, but they were all destroyed in the basement of my home when we had the flood here a few winters ago. So that's an experience that everyone doesn't have.

When I finally decided to leave college for a while, I went to work for the Standard Oil Company. The district sales manager for the company at that time was Mr. P. H. McCullough. He was a Scotchman. His assistant was G. P. Litch. They had a main sales office in Reno. Mr. McCullough interviewed me and asked a few questions. He told me that Mr. Litch was out in the field making a visitation to a lot of their plant locations, that he would be in within the next few days, but I could go ahead and take a physical examination, which was a requirement, and that I could work temporarily out of the Reno plant until he came in.

When Mr. Litch finally got back into Reno, I was called from the plant to see him and be interviewed by him. As I remember, it was on July 2, 1925. He asked me, he apologized, he said, "You don't mind if I call you Reno?"

And I says, "Certainly not." We were very informal as far as the Standard Oil Company was concerned.

He said, "Would you like to go to Elko?"

I says, "Wherever the company would like to send me, it would be satisfactory with

me. However," I said, "I just won a lawsuit up there and it might not be for the best interests of the company to send me up there." I had to go into detail and tell him about this lawsuit deal, and he chuckled and laughed to himself.

He says, "Well, perhaps you are right." He said, "How would you like to go to Tonopah?"

I said, "Wherever the company wants to send me. I'm your slave now. I' in your employee."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you what I think I'm going to do. I'll send you to Tonopah, and the warehouse clerk in Tonopah, I'll send to Elko." He said, "How soon can you get ready?"

I says, "It won't take me long to pack my luggage."

He said, "The train leaves in about two hours. Think you can make it?"

I said, "Sure."

He says, "Well, I'll have Mr. Carlson (who was the cashier at that time for the Reno sales office, C. A. Carlson, Jr.), I'll have him get you a ticket and give you a certain amount of travel expense money, and," he says, "you catch this train and we'll make reservations for a berth on that Pullman for you."

So I was staying at a little hotel there on Second Street; I think it was called the Senator, right across from the old Wigwam Theater. So I went and got my luggage, came back up to the office and got my tickets, and went over to the depot and caught this train in the late afternoon. Of course, when I left Reno, Reno was beautiful. It was that time of the year when all the roses were in bloom and Reno was just beautiful. When I was on the train I woke up real early in the morning, just after we had left Mina, and I looked out at that bleak, dreary, dry, hardly-even-any-sagebrush-growing area, and, oh, goodness, it was actually the first time I had been that far away from home in my life, and I was about ready to fall off the train and start walking



back, but we finally pulled into the depot in Tonopah.

This young fellow that I was going to take his place there at the Tonopah plant, he was at the train to meet me, and we drove directly up to the agent's house. His name was George Pierce. I don't know whether he looked me over or what, but the first thing he said to me, he said, "Do you play a musical instrument?"

And I said, "Yes, I do."

He says, "What do you play?"

I said, "I play the saxophone, and play the banjo a little bit, sing a little bit."

He says, "Do you belong to the union?"

I said, "Yes, I belong to the union in Reno, the musicians' union."

He says, "Well, that's fine." He says, "Have you got your horns with you?"

I said, "Nope."

And he said, "Well, if I can get you a job playing for a dance, would you be interested?"

I says, "That all depends upon if I can get a musical instrument." And I asked what I could get—I asked what the pay would be.

He said, "Well, the pay would be twenty-five dollars and expenses."

I says, "Well, you get me a horn!"

I told Mr. Pierce, I said, "If you get me a horn, I'll play for the dance." I said, "Where're we going?"

He says, "Out to Smoky Valley, Darrough's Hot Springs." (I thought to myself, I still wasn't very sold on staying very long in Tonopah, so barren-looking.) So he rustled up a saxophone for me, and there was three of us left Tonopah; I think it was late afternoon on July Fourth or July third. We went out to Darrough's Hot Springs to play for this dance, and the people I played with became very good friends of mine. The gentleman that played the piano, his name was Billy Cardelli. He was Italian, and he was a very fine piano player, and he was also very good on the accordion. The

other gentleman that played in the band, his name was Elmer Tansey, and he was a clerk working for the First National Bank there in Tonopah. He played the drums just as a hobby.

Evidently, I was quite a success with Billy Cardelli, and he had quite a group of friends in the musicians' local there in Tonopah. After we had played for this dance, which lasted 'til about four o'clock in the morning, we drove on back to Tonopah. He spread word around that I was quite a very fine musician. So it wasn't long after that I became quite demanded for playing in various orchestras down there. In fact, I got practically a steady job playing with George Pierce and his group. His group was George Pierce, violin; Elmer Tansey, he played the drums; Bud Morris (he worked for the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad), he played the saxophone; and I played the sax. We had about a five-piece band.

This job that I had, working for the Standard Oil Company, only paid \$120 a month. My board bill was seventy-five dollars, and my room was forty-five, so I didn't have very much money to go on. The fact of the matter is there was an entire month's salary, right there. But I made more money playing for dances in Tonopah than I was making as a warehouse clerk working for the Standard Oil Company.

I thought that I would be in an area where I would be in amongst a bunch of strangers, but all of these people, men and women that I went to school with at the University of Nevada that were from Tonopah, why, they were full of the dickens, and real jovial and friendly, and goodness sakes, why, I think the happiest eight months I ever spent in my life was spent in Tonopah.

There was Margaret Griffin, and there was her sister, Kathleen "Dolly" Griffin. There was Ethel Robb; she married a Fitzgerald. And Procter Hug. They were all in that group from

Tonopah that were attending the University, so I knew nearly all of them.

The first invitation I had socially was to take a blind date and go to a farewell party that was being given by Mrs. Grant Crumley (that was Newt Crumley's mother) at the Goldfield Hotel in Goldfield. And all this group of young people, there was about twelve or fourteen couples, went over there, and this blind date that I had was Lucille Askin. She had a very charming sister, who used to go with a gentleman by the name of Bud Swazey. His mother ran a small hotel in back of the Hotel Mizpah. So Lucille and I became quite good friends.

This first night over there in Goldfield, there was a gal by the name of Katherine Currieux. Her mother was a schoolteacher, and she had some mining claims up here in Galena Canyon. Katherine was a very tall girl. She played the piano real well. Newton Crumley was about fourteen or fifteen years old at that time, and he was just learning how to play the saxophone. He didn't play very many good, sound, healthy, sweet notes. He was nearly all sour! So after listening to him for about thirty minutes, I finally talked him out of his saxophone, and from that point on, Katherine and I, we had a jam session and everybody just enjoyed it very much. I became quite well acquainted with Katherine and all this group that was there.

An oddity happened. This Mrs. Crumley, she said to me, she says, "Aren't you related to the Watts?"

I said, "Yes, my mother was Helen Watt."

She said, "Well, for goodness sakes! Do you know when I was a young girl, I almost married George Watt, your uncle?" She was living in Belmont at that time. So as big as this state is, it's not so large that you don't run across people that know people or they have been acquainted with some of your people and some of your folks.

During the time that I was in Tonopah, we formed a little dramatic club, and I took an active part in one of the plays. Oh, we had a lot of fun. We used to give these weekend parties. There'd be two or three couples would go in together and share the expense. Sometimes we'd put on a little dinner out at Alkali Hot Springs, and sometimes we'll put on a little dinner party over at Goldfield, or maybe someplace right there in Tonopah. We'd put on these little dramas. I think the one that I took the lead in was called "Clarence." It's supposed to be a rather serious play, but it ended up pretty much of a comedy when we got through with it. But the people of Tonopah really enjoyed it.

But getting back to my musical work, every year in Tonopah, the uptown musicians put on this big dance. The musicians' union put on this big dance there in the Knights of Pythias Hall. And it's all gratis work, as far as the musicians are concerned. They'd have some project like, for instance, they were raising money for one of the members that belonged to the Tonopah local at that time (I've forgotten his name). He was quite ill with cancer, and they were raising funds for him for his benefit.

What happened at this big ball—the uptown musicians would go down to the Casino and the bawdy houses and they'd play orchestra down there, where the musicians down in that area can come uptown and they can play their part.

So our group went down, and we was playing in the Casino, which was quite a historical bawdy house there in Tonopah. After I had played down there, I was approached two or three days later and they asked me if I would take a job playing at this bawdy house. That's where the religious teaching that my mother pounded into me when I was just an infant, I do really believe that it paid off,

regardless of the fact that they offered to pay me forty dollars a night, guaranteed pay for three hours' work, plus the tips.

In places like that they have the "kitty" on the musician's stand, and some of these miners that would come in after they had shipped some of their ores and had gotten quite a nice little nest egg, why, they'd come down there and get to dancing with these bawdy house girls, and they would start throwing money at the orchestra. It wasn't done every night, but there were occasions when you'd walk off the stand after playing 'til maybe three or four o'clock in the morning, overtime (you'd get paid overtime, too, by the management), having not less than a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars in your pocket for just one night's work.

Well, I knew all these things, but I just couldn't see that kind of a life, and I saw enough of those musicians to know that actually they become just nothing but bums. They become used to a way of life that is not very healthy. There's a lot of inducements, and they're very evil inducements. So with that thinking on my part, and the very fact that I love my mother and dad very dearly, and I felt that there was a religious obligation to them as well as to my own particular self, I backed away from it. But I still continued to play for the uptown dances.

I spent all winter there, and in the early spring, they had transferred Mr. Pierce from Tonopah to Alturas; and the agent, Mr. Robert R. Rierson, that had been in Goldfield, they moved him from Goldfield to be in charge of the Tonopah station. When the order came through for me to move from Tonopah to Truckee, California, Mr. Rierson gave me a little insight as to the amount of work I would have to do in order to keep caught up, because that Truckee area was entirely a tourist area.

While I was in Tonopah, I had made arrangements to get a spare bedroom. I lived with the Pierces. Of course, when Pierce left, I utilized the spare bedroom and lived with the Riersons. Bob Rierson had married a girl from New York. Her name was Ursula (I don't know what her maiden name was). She was a schoolteacher.

She was telling me one day about how she happened to come out to Goldfield. She wanted to come West. She had this big atlas, so she closed her eyes and she run her finger around in the dark, and bingo! hit on Goldfield. She had to look up Goldfield in an old atlas and found out that the population in Goldfield was 25,000. Of course, that was in the boom days. She had an old one. On her way out on the train, she was telling about how these people asked her where she was going. She was from New York, and she was going to Goldfield. And they was telling her about the desert country with a rattlesnake under every bush. She was quite upset. She said, "When I finally arrived in Goldfield," she said, "I didn't know whether I was going to be able to stay there or not. But, of course," she said, "I met Robert." Little Cupid had a decision there to make and she finally decided to stay in Goldfield. Later on they got married. I think they were married before they were transferred over to Tonopah. They were very good friends of mine.

When I moved to Truckee, everything that Bob Rierson told me about what I'd encounter as far as working was concerned was certainly the truth. I had to get up early and I had to work late. I'd get up around four or five in the morning, and many times I wouldn't get through until about ten or eleven o'clock at night. I had a terrific area to serve. I had an old Mack truck, a solid-tire truck, to haul gasoline clear up on top of Donner Summit while they were building the first

highway over the summit. I had to take care of Hobart Mills, and I had to go clear down to Hirshdale on the Truckee, and then I went up Truckee River up as far as Squaw Valley, besides servicing all the service stations and garages, and so forth, right there in the town of Truckee itself.

So I was going pretty strong. It was the policy of the company, knowing that their men had to work all of this overtime, to have all of their men keep a log of all the overtime that they worked during this heavy tourist season. The advice that Bob Rierson gave me before I left Tonopah was, "Rene," he said, "now, when you get to Truckee," he said, "You're going to work a lot of overtime, and," he said, "if you want to make a hit with a Scotchman, Mr. McCullough, when the time comes for him to ask you how much overtime you have coming, all you ask him for is just your vacation period." And I didn't forget that. I kept track of my time. Now, my overtime would be in addition to the two weeks' vacation.

So one day I was sitting in the office. It was just the early part of November, or something like that. The agent there at Truckee, his name was Ralph Holland. Ralph and I were sitting there in the office, and Mr. McCullough called up on the phone and he said, "Is Lemaire there?"

And Ralph said, "Yes, he's sitting here in the office."

He says, "Well, ask him how much overtime he's got coming."

I told Ralph, I said, "You tell Mr. McCullough that as far as my overtime is concerned, all I'm interested in is just my two weeks' vacation," and I said I felt that as far as working for the company was concerned, there was many days and many weeks—two or three months every winter—I didn't even earn my keep as far as the salary was concerned. I

had felt that I would be derelict in my job not to show my appreciation by putting in a little overtime, a little extra work in the summer when the company had an opportunity to pick up some of the expenses, as far as paying me in the winter when I wasn't doing anything. Mr. McCullough argued and argued, and he wanted to get my overtime, but I wouldn't give it to him. I had, as I said, twenty-one days. So I made quite a hit with the Scotchman.

It was only a short time after that that the Standard Oil Company decided to cut their operating costs by reducing the number of employees. They gave the choice to the employees themselves, especially the various agents that were operating under the Reno district. They called all these agents in, and they told them that they'd had this regional meeting in San Francisco of all the district managers, and they had to cut operating costs of the entire Standard Oil of California operating zone not less than ten percent. It was up to these district managers to go back to their respective sales areas and contact their own sales managers in each plant and ask them what their desires would be as far as a curtailment of their wages by at least ten percent, and where these wholesale bulk plants were operating on a three-man basis, to cut them to two in the summertime and in the wintertime to one. Of course, these larger plants, where they were operating with five, six, and seven men, had to make the same kind of curtailment as far as their operating personnel were concerned.

And an interesting thing which, to me, showed, in a sense, the greed of human nature: We were on the threshold of this depression, and it would not have worked a hardship at all on everyone in connection with those men working under the Reno sales agency to have taken a ten percent cut. It wouldn't have thrown anybody out of work. As it

was, all of these plant managers, they says, "Well, as far as we're concerned, why, we're getting this present salary, and we don't want to see our salary cut, and if it's necessary, why, I won't mind getting up on a tank truck and making a delivery myself." During that depression period, their decision increased unemployment, whereas if they'd all been willing to take a ten percent cut, all of these persons that had been steadily employed for the company would have continued on the payroll. But, that was the order of the day.

Then the depression finally did come, boy, they really cut from one end of the Reno sales agents to the other, east and west, north and south! But, due to the fact that I had made this hit with Mr. McCullough, he kept me on, and there was part of the winter that I didn't even work for the sales department; I worked for the engineering department. The engineer in charge of the plant, maintenance and everything, his name was Glen Macy. Mr. Macy, he said, "Rene, I hardly know what kind of an Indian sign you've got on the boss, but," he said, "he wants you to work and stay with the company. Now," he said, "What we're going to do, we're going to move all of the supplies for all of these plants from one part of this Reno plant area over to another part." And he said, "For goodness sakes, now, don't work too fast, will you. Take it easy."

Well, in spite of dragging my heels on that particular job, I finished it. And he says, "Well, now I gotta find something else for you to do." He says, "I'll tell you what we'll do. we'll have to dig a big ditch so I can put in an insulating box between the steam plant and the warehouse. And he said, "For goodness sakes, don't work too fast."

Well, I never dug a ditch in my life, and I was still the spoiled brat, the only son of a very fine family, but nevertheless, I grit my teeth and I wouldn't give up my job. I was

determined I was going to stay with this no matter what. So I was digging this ditch out there one day, and Mr. McCullough came out and he watched me for quite a while, and I was watching him out of the corner of my eye. Finally, he said, "Say, Lemaire, don't take very many brains to do that kind of work, does it?"

I said, "Nope. To work for the Standard Oil Company, you have to have a strong back and a weak mind." Mr. McCullough never said a word. He whirled around and he went and got his— I think he was driving a Cadillac or a Lincoln, or something like that, and he went out through the yard, but he never criticized me for the statement that I made.

It was only a short time after that that they needed some help, and inasmuch as I was single and was free to move around very readily, they sent me up to Westwood. I worked up there for a couple of months during those winter months. Then I came back to Reno, and they sent me down to Minden, and I worked there for awhile to relieve a fellow that had the measles or the mumps or something. Then finally, they moved me out to Fernley, and I worked there all summer 'til things began to open up at Lake Tahoe. When things opened up at Lake Tahoe, they sent me up to the south end of the lake, to what they called the Tallac branch. And it was at the Tallac branch that I got to know the Richardson family real well because I stayed there at Camp Richardson.

We just had the most wonderful time that summer. The Richardson family are a wonderful family, and I accompanied Florence quite often on a lot of our trips, horseback rides, and boat rides. She and her brother, Bud, were twins. He was tall, good-looking, dark, very handsome, and Florence was rather short, and not too good-looking, but a very sweet girl. She was a wonderful, beautiful-personality girl. And we just had a



lot of fun. I even played for dances up there. There'd be about four couples, and we'd take the Florence B' (that was a kind of a power launch), We would go over into Emerald Bay on these beautiful moonlight nights, eat watermelon, and I'd twang on the guitar or banjo, and we'd sing, and listen to the music from some of those resorts around Emerald Bay. Oh, it was a wonderful summer!

While I was up there working for the company, they said, "Where you going to go when the Lake closes up this fall?"

I said, "Well, there's one place that I'll never go to. That's Wendover." That's right on the edge of the Reno sales agency area, and right on the edge of the desert.

I'll be darned if one morning P. H. McCullough didn't call up on the phone, and he said to me, he said, "Rene, we're having a difficult time trying to find a place for you. Now," he said, "there's an opening at Wendover, and," he says, "you'll still retain your status as a plant manager at the same salary, or," he said, "we can drop you back to what they call an area salesman, in which you continue on as a truck driver. But," he said, it's up to you to make the decision."

And I said, "Well, can I kind of think this over for a couple of days?"

He said, "Sure, there's no hurry about it."

So two or three days went by, and finally I called up the Reno office and I told him, "Well, I've decided that I'll take that Wendover job." I said, "That'll be quite an experience for me. I don't like to go out there, but I will go."

He said, "Well, I'm glad to hear you say that."

So when they closed up at the Lake, I had quite a lot of cleanup work to do, not only at Tallac, but also up at Tahoe City. I took care of a lot of the year-end business. Then I finally finished up there, then I was transferred to Wendover. Believe it or not, the man that I

replaced (his name was J. K. Metzker) had bought a little cabin out of Salduro and had moved it in, so I bought this cabin from him; I think it was for around fifty dollars. So I was living like the life of Reilly. I had my own little place to live, and the people there in Wendover were very gracious to me while I was working in Wendover.

I spent about eighteen months in Wendover. It was in Wendover where I met this cute little wife of mine. And finally, when I decided to get married and she said, "Yes," I couldn't see working for the company and being kicked around from one place to another and raise a family. Being the only son, Mother and Dad wanted me to come back here in their later years and be with them. So that was the decision that I made.

I resigned from the company. The company exercised every influence that they possibly could to try to get me to stay on. They sent the manager from Elko over to see me. They sent the manager from Ely over to see me. They sent the chief auditor of the Reno office to see me and try to get me to continue on with the company. He said, "Rene, you're silly to quit." And they offered me a new place, any new branch or new plant facility with a great big increase in salary. It was quite a decision to make, but I still couldn't see getting married and raising a family and being kicked around like I knew a lot of the personnel connected with the company had to go through. Then I thought of my mother and dad being over here all alone. They had quite a few assets here. I knew that my dad, especially, was getting to the age in life where he needed some help, and after all, being the only child, by coming over here and working with him, why, I was not only helping him and seeing both Mother and Dad, but I was also working for my own interests. So I moved back over here in 1929. That was the year I got married. I've been here ever since.

During this time, my vocations have been very diversified, such as assisting my dad in a service station, garage, Ford auto dealership, ranching, mining, and politics. Of course, I've been a musician. If it wasn't that I'd been a musician, we'd've starved to death during the Depression. But a musician, we had cream cake and T-bone steaks!

It was during the Depression years that we built the motel. We borrowed enough money on a savings and loan certificate to buy a carload of lumber, and with the assistance of some of our neighbors, we built ten small ten by sixteen cabins. All they had in them was just a bed, cold running water, and a gas hot plate. Then Fred Altenburg, Sr., owner of the Nevada Hotel, became furious because we were filled every night, whereas his hotel business fell clear off. Instead of upgrading his hotel, he became very resentful and built an elaborate service station on the presumption that such a competitive business would force us to the wall, break us. As it turned out, his thinking was wrong, because we were very successful with our motel. And as years have gone by, we now own his service station. C'est la vie.

### THE BATTLE MOUNTAIN STATE BANK

Not very many people know it, but I'm a past president of a bank. I'd like to give a little history of the Battle Mountain State Bank. The original stockholders of the bank were J. B. Horton, who used to run the Mercantile here in Battle Mountain; my uncle, Auguste C. Lemaire, who used to operate the Lemaire store; George Russell of Elko, who used to own and control the Russell Land and Livestock Company; W. G. Adams, who came here to Battle Mountain as a receiver for the Horton Mercantile when they were in financial stress; and Fred Altenburg, who

owned and controlled the Nevada Hotel. Those five men put up five thousand dollars apiece. It only required a capitalization of twenty-five thousand dollars to form a bank in those days. They were granted a charter to do business as the Battle Mountain State Bank in 1925.

Mr. Horton became rather elderly and he wanted to get out of the responsibilities and activities of being a director of the bank, so he sold his interest to a gentleman by the name of George Southward, an Englishman who married a woman by the name of Mrs. Jenkins. (That's Louise Marvel's mother.) When he came to Battle Mountain, he came here as a sort of superintendent to look out after Mrs. Jenkins' ranching interests. His employment progressed and he also was successful in winning the hand of Mrs. Jenkins. During the big flu epidemic of 1918, she passed away, and he came into that estate and inherited a good sum of money. When Mr. Horton decided to sell out, Mr. Southward had the money, and he bought out Mr. Horton's interest in the bank.

Then later on, Mr. Southward was bought out of the W. T. Jenkins Company by Mrs. Marvel and her other relatives. George Southward moved to Reno. When he left here, he sold his interest in the bank to Noble Getchell. Later on, George Southward received an appointment as superintendent of the banks of the state of Nevada.

When we had the bank crisis, in order for this bank to open again, they had to raise an additional amount of capital, and with the assets as they were appraised, they had to raise an additional \$25,000 (the capital was raised to \$50,000). In 1939, Getchell sold his interest in the bank to me, and later on, I bought the interest of Charlie Littrell. In 1940 or 1941—I forget which—they elected me as president of the Battle Mountain State Bank.



The history of this bank is rather interesting. I think they were in operation only one or two years before they started paying dividends. The original capital that was invested by these five men, I think they had all that money returned to them in the way of dividends in less than five or ten years, so it was quite a successful venture.

George Russell was president before I was. When I became president of the bank, he, being elderly, and being he was in Elko and all, he continued to serve on the board, but he wanted to relinquish the duties of president, so they chose me.

We had a lot of trials and tribulations at first, due to the fact that in this area business was stagnant. There were very few opportunities to make loans. Our investments primarily were made in long-term government bonds in order to take advantage of the low rate of interest. Mr. W. C. Adams, who had been cashier of the bank for many years, in fact from its very inception, became very lax when it came to the laws, and our capital structure was such that we could only make a loan of around \$15,000. On a court order certificate we had loaned the Gold and Silver Circle Mines \$15,000. The one who was the receiver for those properties was a fellow by the name of Trousseau. Their operation at that time was at Midas, where they was mining gold. The operation wasn't too successful. To meet his payroll, he had to continue borrowing money. (I found out later that he was a spendthrift.) And without any authorization whatsoever, besides the \$15,900 court certificate, our cashier, Mr. W. G. Adams, on a personal note, loaned this fellow, Trousseau, \$5,000. And when he did that, the superintendent of banks became quite provoked. He said that as far as our bank was concerned, we had overextended our loaning limits, over and above the maximum limit of \$15,000.

On different examinations that was made, Mr. Adams was rather careless as far as monies was involved, and so forth. Mr. W. D. LaRue came to town one time on an examination, and called me up before him. He said, "Rene, I'm sorry, but there's something radically wrong with the way the money is being handled at the bank. I'm afraid that if we continue to go on like we're going here, it's liable to get every one of you in trouble,"

I said, "Well, what do you suggest?"

He said, "I suggest you try to get another cashier."

My uncle, Auguste Lemaire, who was still a director, he and I went up to Elko and had an interview with George Russell, who was also still a director. We discussed the matter and he told me that the way he felt about it, that in the years past there was a question about Glen Adams' honesty and they had private auditors come in, and they made a thorough investigation and an audit for the bank and all of its assets and everything else, and it proved that as far as Adams was concerned, that he was an honest person. He said, "As far as I'm concerned, if you would let Mr. Adams go and hire someone else, you don't know who you're going to get. You might go to the bank some morning and find even all the doorknobs are missing."

Now that was the statement that was made by George Russell. (I think that he had a "Jr." behind his name. There is another George B. Russell; it's the uncle of Charlie Russell.) So his feeling, as he expressed it, convinced my uncle, Auguste, that we should just continue on and see what the end results would be, but each time that LaRue came to town, why, he was very upset about the way this money was being handled, and when this loan was made to Trousseau, he really became upset. The fact of the matter, he told me, as president of the bank, he says, "I'm going to give you

fellows one of three choices. You are either going to have to come up with the capital, or you're going to have to sell the bank, or you're going to have to liquidate it." He was very determined.

And I said, "Well, I'll take this to the directors and find out what their reaction is to it."

And he says, "Well, I'll be back in another six months and I've got to have an answer." So we called a stockholders' meeting and discussed it. And we decided that since the bank was the only bank here in Battle Mountain, and the town did need facilities such as a bank, and the bank had been beneficial as far as the original stockholders were concerned, it would be unfair to the people to liquidate the bank. They all felt that it would be not advisable to try to increase the capital structure, so the final decision was that I was instructed to see if I couldn't find someone that would be interested in buying.

Well, at that time, as it is today, the largest bank was the First National Bank. I interviewed the officials of the bank to find out if they were interested in considering buying this bank and they said, "No." It was too small for them.

Well, previous to this problem, O. O. Bates had taken over the Henderson Bank in Elko, and had also previously taken over the Austin bank. I contacted him, and he said that if terms and conditions and everything else would warrant it, why, he would like to consider purchase. He was fearful that perhaps maybe someday the county seat would be moved from Austin to Battle Mountain, and if that would be the case, the county funds, naturally, would go along with the movement, and it would be very bad for his branch that he had bought from Eason and Hiskey, the old Lander County Bank there in

Austin. That bank, by the way, is the oldest bank in the state of Nevada.

So I made several trips to Ely by airplane. I happened to have an airplane at that time, and I used to fly back and forth. Mr. Bates sent in Lloyd Clark, his chief auditor, who came over to Battle Mountain and made a thorough audit of all of our loans and everything. And the result was that we finally came to an agreement as to his purchasing of the bank, and it became part of the Nevada Bank of Commerce chain. In the deal that was finally consummated, there was some of our slow loans, such as those that had been made to the Gold and Silver Circle Mines, and also the mining property south of Valmy, called the Marigold mining property, we had to retain those, but all the rest was absorbed by Bates and his NBC setup.

I always liked the banking business, in just the short time that I had served as president, and so I asked Mr. Bates if I could buy enough stock to be part of his Nevada Bank of Commerce organization and perhaps maybe serve as a director on his board of directors. He was agreeable to it, so I bought a fairly large block of his Nevada Bank of Commerce stock and became a director of the Nevada Bank of Commerce in 1943, when the deal was made. And I have been a director of the Nevada Bank of Commerce ever since. If the good Lord is willing, I will have been a director in the Nevada Bank of Commerce twenty-five years, a year from this coming August. So I been actively engaged in rubbing elbows, as far as finances are concerned, with some of the very fine financial leaders in our state since way back in 1938 or '39 or—when was it? Or 1941. I think I bought that first stock—guess it was in '39. That's almost thirty years, isn't it? So I've been connected with finance since that time, and that's about all I

have to say in connection with my financial associations.

### **MEMBERSHIP IN FRATERNAL AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS**

One fraternal organization which I belong to is the Masonic Lodge. I never went any further than the third degree; I'm classed as a Blue Lodge Mason. Also, when I was just a young fellow, I joined the Knights of Pythias, just before I went to the University of Nevada in the fall of 1921. And the members of the Knights of Pythias lodge here in Battle Mountain conferred upon me a high office, so I was the youngest Chancellor-Commander that has ever been recorded—and that I know of—anywhere in the state of Nevada, and it could be, in the nation. I was only seventeen when I was Chancellor-Commander of the Knights of Pythias order here in Battle Mountain.

As far as civic organizations are concerned, I'm a past president of the Lions Club. I took a very active part in the Lions Club when it was first organized here in Battle Mountain. But it went along for several years and finally, they dropped their charter. Finally they became reactivated. And I was a charter member, also, of the second organization of the Lions Club.

This club has been very active in our community. They have sponsored many worthwhile projects. They are the ones that help plant the grass in the football field here for the high school. They've been very active in connection with mosquito control. They've been very active in assisting both the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts, and very active in the project to help the blind and the poor. They helped also the Battle Mountain Little League in a lot of their activities. Their main entertainment program that they put on each spring is their rodeo. And they've been very

favorably blessed because they usually put this rodeo on in the month of April or the month of May, and as luck would have it, usually the weather has been very favorable for them. Perhaps maybe even prior to the time that they are going to put on the rodeo, or even after the rodeo, we usually get some kind of a snowstorm. It's pretty hard to stay on a horse even when it's dry, let alone when it's covered with snow.

### **INTEREST IN AVIATION**

Besides having the experience of driving a racing car, I used to love to fly. Fact of the matter is, I have down in the basement some very fine pictures of various interesting people that were connected with aviation in the Army Air Force. The first flying lessons that I ever took in my life was in Salt Lake City. I was working at that time for the Standard Oil Company at Wendover. I had a very good friend there that was flying, and I used to drive into Salt Lake over the weekend and I would drive out to the Salt Lake airport and I would take flying lessons from Tommy Thompson, known as the Thompson Flying Service. And the airplanes that we flew, back in 1928, were very flimsy structures and very uncertain as to whether you would come down safely. I remember the type of plane that I learned how to fly was a biplane, long-winged shaped. I don't remember whether it was a Fairchild or a Steerman. It was quite an airplane. But I finally soloed in the darn thing. Then I got married and left Wendover and came to Battle Mountain. So I got away from it.

Then in 1938, a fellow by the name of—I just have a terrible time remembering names. But anyway, this pilot came in here with a small forty-horsepower Cub. He interested quite a few of the young people

here in the community to do some flying. And my cousin, Charles Lemaire, who was always interested in anything connected with aviation and mechanical work, he finally encouraged me to go out and fly this little forty-horsepower Cub.

Well, it was a hot afternoon and a very underpowered aircraft, and this fellow, Fred something, the pilot, he said, "I understand you've had some flying experience. What we'll do, we'll get up to around a thousand feet and then I'll let you go ahead and fly it. Then I'll be able to see what experience you've had."

Well, we took it, and there is one thing about a Cub— it will take off very readily, but they're quite underpowered. We just flew around for about a half hour or so and we couldn't get any altitude higher than three or four hundred feet. So he got disgusted and he said, "Oh, go ahead and fly it, anyhow." We flew around for a little while and I was very disgusted and disappointed in this particular type of aircraft, and inasmuch as quite a few of my friends were flying it, I thought to myself, "Somebody is going to get hurt in this thing."

So, unbeknown to my wife, Etta Marie, I purchased a Cub airplane that was a trainer. At that time it was fifty-horsepower, a continental driven engine, a great big propeller, and only a single ignition, but it was still a much safer airplane to fly than this little forty-horsepower. Later I was able to purchase a Piper Cub Cruiser, which is about an eighty-five-horsepower airplane, through the factory at Lockhaven, Pennsylvania. It then became a problem of going there to get it. We were notified as to when the plane would be ready, so I flew back on United Air Lines to as far as Dayton, changed to Penn Central and from there to Pittsburgh. Then the problem came as how was I was going to get from Pittsburgh down to Altoona. I called the airport to see

if I could charter a plane and they said, "Yes, you can have a pilot fly you over to Altoona."

I said, "For how much?"

They said, "For \$175.00." That was about three times as much as I paid to come all the way from Salt Lake City to Pittsburgh.

I said, "Well, I don't want to buy your airplane, I just want to fly from Pittsburgh to Altoona."

Then I began looking for another way to go to Lockhaven, where the factor was (we went by Altoona). The end result was I bought a fare on the railroad and went from Pittsburgh to Lockhaven for something like three dollars and seventy-five cents. That was quite a saving to me.

We got to Lockhaven and I had to stay over there that night, so the next morning I went out to the factory. They had the plane all ready and I was ready to take off and I began looking around for what was called a mixture control. A mixture control is very essential for your fuel mixture when you are flying at high altitudes. I called the attention of the airport operator to the fact that the airplane didn't have a mixture control. He said, "Well, you don't have to have a mixture control unless you're flying above four or five thousand feet."

And I said, "Well, in our country, we couldn't even take off from our airports because they're all above that elevation."

He said, "Oh, gosh! You'd better take this back over to the factory and have them install that control for you."

And I said, "Well, that would be a good idea." So I was delayed about an hour waiting for that to be done. When he brought the plane back over, I asked him which was the right direction from there to Dayton, Ohio. He came out from around the hangar there, and he says, "Well, it's right over that big high mountain there."

And I thought to myself that there must be a big high mountain range over there behind those little ol' foothills I could see right close by. Vision in that area is not very clear 'cause there's so much smoke from industry. If you have a two-mile visibility, they call it a clear day back there. So I got the general direction, as far as going towards Dayton, Ohio. Before I'd left home, going to pick up this plane, I had a very good friend who was a pilot and had done a lot of flying in that area. And he said, "For goodness sakes, Pane, when you're flying visual contact, then you have reference to ground points." He said not to pay too much attention to those but to fly pretty much a compass course. He said that all the rivers and the railroads and the mountains going all directions do not have any definite patterns as far as their topography is concerned. "So be sure and fly that compass" (which turned out to be very good advice to me).

So finally, I took off from Lockhaven, and I was out about thirty or thirty-five minutes, and, as I said before, the atmospheric condition there is rather smokey. I figured if I could just get above this haze, I could be able to see where I'm going. I got up around three or four thousand feet. And I was above this hazy condition where it was clear, bright sunlight and plenty of good fresh air. But I couldn't see the ground. Then I had to come back into this haze, and evidently, the wind drift blew me off course some distance. I finally saw this fairly large-sized town ahead of me, and I thought to myself, "Well, I've got to determine exactly where I am." I thought that I had perhaps drifted north on my course. Anyway, I drifted down over this depot and I caught the first few, five or six letters of this great big long name. I saw P-U-N-X-S-A... and I thought, "Well, goodness!" And I didn't get the rest of it, so I went up to

a little higher elevation in flight and I looked at my maps, and I looked first to see if there was a town that began with a P-U-N-X-S-A... to the north of my course, and there wasn't one, so I looked south, and sure enough, there was a place called Punxsatawny. I'll never forget that name as long as I live. I can forget people's names and a lot of towns, but I'll never forget that one!

I was about fifteen or twenty miles south of my course, so I altered my course to make the correction, and I finally got back on my course at a place where there were these great, big, immense oil storage tanks, and I flew right straight through to Dayton, Ohio. There are about four or five airports there, and I didn't want to land in any of the large commercial airports there. I had marked one of these small, private airports, and this one that I had marked, why, I hit it right on the nose, which is fortunate for me. I flew from there to a place in Illinois, stopped there overnight; and I flew from there the next day to Des Moines, Iowa, stayed there overnight; and the next night I flew from there to North Platte, stayed there overnight. And from there, I flew to Cheyenne. There was one place, crossing the prairies, where I went south of my course again and I had to make a correction.

An amusing thing happened on that flight. At a place called Pine Bluff, I saw this wind sock out in this hay field, and there was a hangar there. I thought to myself, "I'd better check and see if I got enough fuel to go on into Cheyenne." So I landed there, and I was looking at my maps (I had my plane right up close to the hangar), and I was startled. A little old fellow with a goat moustache (he must have been about seventy years old) put his head up over the side of the airplane and he says, "Hi, partner, how ya doin'?"

I said, "Oh, I'm doin' all right."



And he says, "Hey, you've got a brand new airplane there, don't you?" I said that I was just flying it out from the factory.

He says, "Well, where you from?" Rather than tell him that I was from Battle Mountain, 'cause I'd have to go into a lot of detail to try to explain where Battle Mountain was, I said I was from Reno, Nevada. He seemed to know where Reno was. That was acceptable.

He said, "You know, my wife and I, we fly."

I said, "You do!"

He says, "Yeah, I've got a private license and I got an airplane in that hangar."

I said, "What kind of airplane do you have?" And he told me that he had a Luscombe. So I got out, and we got quite friendly and chummy and he had to show me this airplane.

I said, "How far is it from here to Cheyenne?" And he said it was only about forty-five or fifty miles. I said, "Well, I was wondering if I had enough gasoline to go that far." He wanted to know my cruising speed, and I told him that I could make it easily in thirty or forty minutes.

He said, "If you don't hit any head winds, that's about what it will take you. With this plane that I fly, I usually make it in about twenty or twenty-five minutes with favorable weather conditions.

So I got into Cheyenne, and as luck would have it, it started to rain. You have to fly across the Rockies from Cheyenne to Laramie and then to Rock Springs and through that area. I tried to go through there but it was snowing and so I stayed over in Cheyenne until the next day when the weather cleared. Then I flew on through there to Rock Springs, refueled, and I asked the pilot there if there was a chance that I could make it on into Salt Lake before sundown.

He said, "Oh, sure, you can make it." I did have navigation lights, but I didn't have landing lights. I took off and I really had this

Cruiser going about seventy-five to eight percent of the throttle. I was just crossing the Wasatch range, east of Salt Lake City, and all of a sudden...(I found out later that one of the spark plugs had worked itself loose in the right-hand rear cylinder of this machine and it had popped out). I didn't know whether I had blown a hole in the piston or if anything had happened. There was a terrific racket and I didn't know whether to shut off the engine, the ignition, or what to do. I did bring the throttle back a little bit, and I thought that if I could just take a long downward descent into Salt Lake, I could make it to the airport. Of course, you didn't know if you had a bad rod or what the dickens was wrong up front because you couldn't see. I kept coming down—I was up around nine or ten thousand feet above sea level because I needed plenty of elevation crossing the mountain. And I started this long descent into the Salt Lake airport. The sun was just beginning to set over across the hills over towards Wendover. I came in and made my proper approach at around a thousand feet above the airport.

I thought to myself, "Well, maybe now I'd better see if this engine will rev up at all enough so that I might have to maintain level flight in case some of these commercial airlines come in here." (They have a priority.) I tried it and I could maintain level flight. But with this terrible noise that was existing and with this engine, why, I didn't know what the dickens to do. So I made a downwind approach pattern and finally headed into the wind, and when I headed that Cruiser in for that landing, the control tower could have given me all kinds of red lights and I would never have stopped because I was actually making an emergency landing.

I got in there all right, no harm done, but it was quite an experience! The fellow who was running the Thompson Flying Service

there at the time, I think his name was Scott. I taxied up to the hangar there, and I didn't know until I got out of the airplane just exactly what was wrong. When I stepped out of the airplane and looked up ahead, there was this spark plug hanging out of the airplane on a wire to the edge of the engine cowling. So I got my bags and went into the office of the Thompson Flying Service there, and this fellow who had been working out back said, "Oh, that was you? Well, you just came in from Lockhaven, didn't you?"

And I said, "Yeah."

And he said, "Did you know your engine was missing?"

I said, "Yes, I knew my engine was missing."

He said, "What happened?"

And I told him a spark plug has just fallen out when I crossed the mountain range back there. He looked at me and looked at that airplane and just shook his head as if to say, "Boy, you sure are a lucky guy." And I knew I was.

I didn't have any more trouble after that. I came right along home. I didn't have any trouble at all, really, except getting off course twice.

The only companion I had on that flight was a little red and white spider. And that little spider would come up to get warm on the main strut every day when we'd be flying and stay there, and when I'd land someplace and stop overnight I would forget about the spider, but the next day it would always be there. When I got to Cheyenne, I guess it was too much rain for the spider—I guess he got off. He got tired of my company.

I had a lot of fun flying. I enjoyed it very much. During the war with Japan we had these training bases out here in the West, and the Civil Air Patrol was very often called on to make search and rescue missions. I was at

that time a squadron commander of the Battle Mountain squadron, and we had about fifteen or twenty men and women that were part of the squadron. We had three or four planes that we could use to go out on these search and rescue problems that sometimes would arise in this area. I don't know how many hours that I have actually flown, having been called out on emergencies due to planes that would be lost that were on some routine mission, training missions. Planes from the Wendover air base would come to Elko and back up to Pocatello and then back to Wendover, and then there would be planes that would be from California someplace, maybe around Sacramento, that would fly on a routine mission to Pocatello or up to different places in Idaho, and then some of them would get lost.

I know there was one P-51 Mustang—there was a group of four or five in this squadron that flew to Pocatello, and they did a round robin; they didn't land up there but refueled, and on their way back to Sacramento, one of these planes veered to the right, and he landed in a desolate area north of here up in the Owyhee Desert. we were called out. We had practically all of the Nevada wing of the Civil Air Patrol located here in Battle Mountain, established a base here to go search for this lost plane, and we finally found him, as I said, out in Owyhee.

My cousin and I found him. He had left the plane. He was a former Nevada boy, and he evidently got pretty thirsty, and he saw all the cattle out there and he said, "Well, where there's cattle, there must be water," so he took up one of the cattle trails and went and got some water. He was on back a ways from the plane when we landed there. It was only a short time after that that the air force, which had planes located in Elko and were also searching, saw these two planes on the ground there. They radioed back, and it was only a



short time after that they sent out a helicopter from the Elko field. They picked up the pilot, and later on they sent in transport crews and they dismantled the plane and hauled it out. That was one mission that we served on. I've served on several.

Some of the areas that we had to search was in and around the Ruby Mountains and also north of Elko, up around Jarbidge, and those high mountain countries. And it was usually in the dead of winter, subzero weather and very cold and very vicious. Fortunately, we were all very lucky. All of us pilots, using our own planes, our own gasoline, we never received any money in compensation for our services, but we felt that we was doing the best we could under the circumstances to help out these young men that get lost or have some kind of an airplane accident someplace. It was a trying ordeal.

I know one time I was flying search in the Ruby Mountains, and it had been reported that supposedly the airplane was down south of Lamoille Canyon, high up in the rim rocks. I happened to be up in Elko at that time with my plane, attending a business meeting, so they asked me if I would take an observer with me and go out and take a look. In the meantime, all these other pilots had returned to Reno, and I was the only one there that they could call on, so I loaded up with fuel and took and flew out over the Rubies. Of course, I was flying a slow, low-powered aircraft. I did see this object from a distance that did look something like maybe it was a part of an airplane, but the only way to make absolutely sure was to go in and look in this canyon. So I got as much altitude as I possibly could to come in over a rim and flew right over this object, which turned out to be just nothing more than a large rock that had evidently rolled down off of this cliff. On the way out I had to come right down to this narrow gorge,

and I'm willing to wager the wingtips on the right-hand side of my plane didn't miss that gorge more than six inches. This fellow that was with me, this observer, he was on the radio, and when he looked out and saw how close that cliff was, why, I never heard a man get so busy in my life than he did on that radio. Good luck and fortune was again with us, and we got back safely to the Elko airport. I reported that the object that they thought could have been an airplane was just nothing more than a large boulder that dropped off the side of the cliff.



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## MY MEMORIES OF NOBLE H. GETCHELL AND GEORGE WINGFIELD

It's been my privilege to have been a very personal friend of Noble H. Getchell's. I heard Noble H. Getchell make this remark, "You know, politics is the greatest indoor sport that there is in the world." He loved politics. In fact at one time, he was not only the state senator from Lander County, but he was Lander County chairman. He also became state chairman of the Republican Party. It was during his several terms that he served as state chairman that he became very well acquainted with George Wingfield.

If you remember back, George Wingfield served as national committeeman of the Republican Party for many, many years, and it was during this time when they were rubbing political elbows that they became quite good friends. During the depression years when the banks all closed and George Wingfield lost nearly all of his banks due to that depression and practically went broke, he had to sell the Golden Hotel in Reno. Regardless of the fact that he did lose the greatest portion of his wealth, he and Getchell still retained that very fine friendship. When the time came for

Getchell to look for someone whom he could trust and who he believed in, that could help him in connection with promotion of the Getchell Mine, the person he contacted was none other than George Wingfield.

There's an interesting story about the Getchell Mine. I should start right at the very beginning of Getchell's mining experience here in the state of Nevada. It would be quite an interesting story.

Let's start, for instance, with the Betty O'Neal Mine. Noble Getchell's father, L. R. Getchell, was a very good friend of my dad's, Henry R. Lemaire, due to their experience in mining. They felt sorry for each other—let's put it that way. In 1918 when we had this influenza epidemic, Noble Getchell's father contracted pneumonia and this influenza. And he realized at his age (he was quite elderly at that time) that he wasn't going to make it. So he sent word up to our home here in Battle Mountain and asked my dad to come on down and see him, which my dad did. Mr. Getchell told my dad, "Henry," he said, "I have all of the Betty O'Neal properties tied up under an

option. I sincerely and honestly believe that there's a terrific opportunity there. Previous to the time that I got this option, this property was owned and operated by people that didn't know anything about mining, and the monies that they raised to do development work, they spent it ridiculously instead of spending it on the property to see if the property had merit. Now," he said, "I sincerely and honestly believe that there is a big chance of a big property up there." And he said, "I don't think that I'm going to make it out of this illness. When my son Noble comes up here, will you give him this message that I have this property under option and I want him to go ahead and see if the property does have merit?" He says, "Noble has had enough mining experience, even though he's been an actor and played in plays and so forth—he has had enough mining experience so that I know he would go in there and approach this thing from a practical approach and make sure that it doesn't have merit or it does have merit. So if I do fade out of the picture, I want you to give him that message, to hang onto that property and do some work up there and see if it does have merit."

It was only a few days after that that he did pass away, and Noble came up from either Arizona or New Mexico. Then my dad delivered him the message. When Noble came up here, he had very little money, but he did have sufficient monies to take care of his father's burial expenses and what expenses had been incurred in connection with the Betty O'Neal property. And he had just a few thousand dollars left.

So following out his father's wishes, he went down this shaft and what had presumably been a hanging wall structure. He had some of his mining men, some of these fellows that were working for him, drill a hole in this hanging wall and take a sample of it. It proved to be a very fine grade

of mill ore, around twenty or thirty or forty ounces, and it was a large body of it. So as he went on down further in depth in the shaft, he also encountered ore, and then there was a drift that went to the east, I think it was, and he encountered ore in that area. In other words, practically every place that Noble Getchell went up there at the Betty O'Neal, he encountered ore that had been overlooked by his predecessors. When he realized that he had this potential up there as far as a good healthy mine, he realized that he had to go get some financing to further develop it, and if necessary, to go ahead and put in a mill.

So he went back to Boston. I don't know how he happened to know this person, but he met this person years ago. This fellow's name was Sias, and he was in Boston, and he could have been a broker or some kind of a businessman or something, but anyway, Getchell carried this problem to him that he had to have this financing. The price of silver was at a pretty good figure at that time. It was back in 1919-1920, wasn't it, because his father passed away in '18. The price of silver was pretty fair at that time. So he raised this money, and he raised just enough to go on with this development work. As the development work proved satisfactory, he kept this friend of his advised back in Boston, and they raised enough money to go ahead and build the Betty O'Neal mill. The capacity of that mill, the maximum capacity, was only about 150 tons a day.

So they started to mill some of this ore, and eventually they built a tunnel that they called the Getchell Tunnel which tapped this shaft. They called it the Able shaft. All of these ores that they were taking from these various levels in this shaft, why, all they had to do was just let it drop down into these gathering points and they would load it into the cars and take it all down to the mill.

It was an easy ore to concentrate. When they finally got into production and started to make some money, they paid five cents a share on their stock—outstanding for I don't know how many years—each month a five-cent dividend per share.

Like Getchell told me at one time, "You know, Rene, when I first went to Betty O'Neal, I was practically broke." He said, "I've always adopted a policy that any money that I make, I always give Louise, my wife, half of it. She looks after that money so that I won't gamble with it. When I left the Betty O'Neal and moved over to Midas, I only lacked, she and I, eight thousand dollars of being half of a millionaire. Now, that was our financial position.

The reason that he left the Betty O'Neal primarily was on account of the depressed price of silver. The Midas property was a gold-bearing ore. So he moved over to Midas and he had nothing but bad luck over there. I say bad luck for the simple reason that the banks all failed. They went through that depression period, and this fellow that was supposed to be a big financier in connection with the operation of these Midas properties.... They changed, see; they consolidated the Betty O'Neal and the Midas property and called it the Gold and Silver Circle Mines Company. They really had a rough problem over there. They made money for awhile, but they ran out of ore.

The ore bodies in the Midas mining district are all vein material and it's pretty high grade, but never of any great width. Getchell did tell me that the bottom of the main shaft over there, that when they had to quit on account of the water problem, that they were in about eight feet deep of ore that run about forty dollars gold. That was at the old price of twenty-five dollars. What he wanted this individual from New York, who was putting

up a lot of the money for this development, he wanted him to run a tunnel from the mill site on up to tap this shaft. He wanted to make this a working tunnel, primarily because he felt that by having this working tunnel, there was about a 400-foot lift that he could do away with as far as pumping the water out of the mine, and then they would have a tunnel that they could operate all the year long, regardless of the winters.

The Midas country is a high country, and they have a terrific amount of snow there some winters. They could lay in enough supplies so they could continue on their operation without interference on account of weather problems. As it was, they would have to raise the ores up out of this Elko Prince shaft and haul it by truck down to the mill, and that was rather expensive and practically impossible to do in the winter months when they had this snow and mud condition to fight. There were many winters when he was over there that you couldn't even go from the lower Clover ranch into Midas on account of the depth of the snow. They'd break through these drifts with bulldozers and try to keep the road open, but the snow would drift forward just a few minutes after they'd gone through. It was difficult to get provisions, and supplies, and mail in there. So Getchell's taste of the Midas property was anything but pleasant.

When spring finally came we had those depression years. There was a gentleman here that used to work for Getchell up at the Betty O'Neal. His name was Emmett Chase. Due to the conditions that existed at that time, Emmett was working out here on the road, on a PWA project, and he bumped into a fellow by the name of Ed Knight, who was a mining man, a prospector. Ed was telling him about this wonderful vein of silver ore that he had run across over in the Osgood Mountains. He told Emmett Chase, he said, "Emmett, you get

me a twenty-five dollar grubstake, and I will go over there and locate some claims in your name and my name. We'll work it together."

Well, Emmett Chase went to a sister-in-law of his (her name is Mrs. Merle Estes) who happened to have a little money in some kind of an account. He borrowed this twenty-five dollars from her and gave it to this fellow, Ed Knight, to go over and see if he could find this silver vein.

So I think Ed bought ten dollars worth of groceries, and enough gasoline for his car to go over and see if he could find this vein. He was gone for about two weeks. I don't know whether he run out of whiskey or run out of food first, but anyway, he finally came back. He gave Emmett Chase this hard luck story, he said, "I looked and looked and looked, and I couldn't find that silver vein, but," he said, "you know, Emmett, there's a great big immense cliff, a big outcropping over there." He said, "It looks like it might have some mineral in it. I brought a sack full of it for you, at least a half a gunny sack," and he said, "I've roasted it, and I've tried to pan it, and it don't show a color or a darn thing as far as gold." So Emmet just figured that he had thrown twenty-five dollars away, and he was trying to figure out how he could pay Mrs. Estes back.

But one day, Getchell came in here from Midas and he bumped into Emmett in the post office. (It used to be right close to that variety store, right there in that Owl Motel. There's a big history behind that location.) Well, he bumped into Emmett and he said, "Emmett, what are you doing?"

Emmett said, "Oh, I'm scrounging around trying to make a little money working for the PWA."

And Getchell said, "You got any prospects of any kind of ore? Anyplace where we can do some mining?" Getchell was getting pretty sick of this Midas deal.

Chase said, "Yeah, I got some ore right down there at my house that Ed Knight brought in. Re says it won't pan, but he says it looks like it might have some value in it. I haven't got enough money even to send it away and have it assayed."

Getchell said, "Well, I'll tell you, Emmett, you go get that sack and bring it over and put it in the car here, and when I go back to the mine," he said, "I'll get our assayer over there to assay it for us." Getchell looked at it first. It just looked like plain old country rock. So he took it over to Midas and took it out of his car and threw it in the office and never even thought of having it assayed. It slipped his mind, I guess. Finally, one day the assayer who was also his mill superintendent came in and He asked Getchell, "By golly, I haven't got a darn thing to do this afternoon. You got any sample you want me to run?"

Getchell said, "Oh, yeah, take a look at that stuff in that sack there. If you're not doing anything, you might as well run that." He said, "I don't think it will run anything. Try it, anyhow."

So this fellow took this stuff and looked at it and he said, "Well, it sure don't look like it's got very much mineral in it, but I'll run it for you." So he took it up to the assay office, ground it up and pulverized it good, and run it through the retorts or whatever they use to run these gold samples. After he caught these—there was little pellets of gold in these ampules, or whatever they call those things that they use to put in the furnaces. So he weighed it up, and this darn stuff run around eight to twelve dollars a ton. So he thought he was salted, so he run some more. He rerun it, this stuff, this ore. By golly, it still held up; it run between eight and twelve dollars a ton.

So he walked down to the office and he says, "Say, Noble, that stuff that looked so poor," he said, "I made a double check on it,



and that stuff will run anywhere from eight to twelve dollars a ton."

Getchell said, "It will?"

And this fellow said, "Yes, it sure as the dickens will."

"Well, I'll be darned."

So it wasn't long after that that Getchell came to Battle Mountain again, and he went and saw Emmett Chase, and he said, "Say, Emmett, can you get me some more of that stuff that you gave to me to have sampled over there at the mine? I'd like to run some more assays on it."

Chase said, "Sure, I think there's a whole mountain of it out there, from what Ed Knight tells me." I think Ed went out and got some more and brought it in to Chase, and Chase, in turn, gave it to Getchell, who had it run. It ran just exactly the same, anywhere from eight to twelve dollars!

So Getchell came in again, and he got ahold of both Knight and Chase and he said, "Say, let's go take a look at this deal you fellows got." So they went as far as they could by auto, then they had to walk about three or four miles up to this big outcropping in this canyon. Getchell says, "Well, where is it?"

Ed Knight said, "Well, that's it right there, that great big immense cliff. That's where I picked this stuff off of."

So Getchell took some more samples himself, had them run, and boy, they checked right out. So he got ahold of these two characters, and he said, "How, listen, I haven't got very much money, but I would like to find out whether this thing has got merit. How what we will do," he said, "we'll go three ways on this. You fellows will own two thirds, and I'll own a third. I'll put up all of the costs as far as supplying the powder and the fuse and the caps and the drills and the gasoline, and so forth, and the food, but you fellows are going to have to put up the labor. And," he said, "I

want around two or three crosscut tunnels into the face of this outcropping to determine if it has any immensity or any large quantity, and we will check it."

So they established a camp there in a tent, and they dug these two or three little crosscut tunnels in the face of this outcropping. Of course, Getchell would go over there every once in awhile. One of these tunnels, they'd gone in, oh, goodness, forty or fifty feet. He went over there one day, and he could hear somebody drilling in the face of this tunnel, and he went back in there and here was Emmett Chase working all alone. He said, "Emmett, you working here all alone?"

"Yeah," he said. "Ed, he figured this stuff wasn't worth anything, and he decided that he'd go prospecting."

Getchell said, "Well, he's not going to go prospecting on my time. I'm paying you guys as far as the grub and supplies and everything else to see what this is. I'm not looking for any other prospects. I want to find out what this is."

So Getchell was real angry about this deal. He waited around the camp there until Ed come walking up over the brow of this hill. When Ed finally got there, why, Getchell began asking him quite a few questions, where he was and what he was doing. This fellow, Ed Knight, he says, "Aw, this thing's not worth anything."

Getchell said to him, "Well, if you feel that this is not worth anything, will you sell me your interest?"

He said, "Sure." Of course, Ed was looking for some whiskey money.

Getchell said, "Well, how much will you take for your interest?"

Ed spoke up and said, "Well, I want at least five thousand dollars."

Getchell said, "Well, wait a minute now, buster. As far as were concerned, why, you told



me this wasn't worth anything, and yet when I want to buy your third out, why, you want to soak me five thousand dollars. That just doesn't make sense." And Getchell reached in his pocket. He happened to have two or three one hundred-dollar bills, and he began kind of unfolding them in front of Ed Knight. Ed began to get the whiskey desire again. Getchell said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, Ed. I'll give you a hundred dollars right here and now, on an option to buy your third interest for five hundred dollars. I'll have thirty days to pay you the other four hundred." Well, that seemed a little unfair and he began again, "Well, that's all right. You either take it or leave it or go to work up here and do this work in this mine. That's what I want, to find out if this thing is worth anything or nothing."

Well, Ed got kind of p.o'd at Getchell, and so he said, "Well, I'll take a hundred dollars with a thirty-day option on the remaining four hundred."

So they wrote out a simple agreement on the back of an envelope, with Emmett Chase as the witness to the deal. So then Getchell really did go to work. He hired some more men, and boy, they began poking those tunnels!

Every time Getchell would go to Reno, he would always see George Wingfield and visit with him, and he was telling him about this prospect he had, this gold property. (Wingfield was still Republican national committeeman and Getchell was still the state chairman.) Wingfield would say, "How's your prospect coming along?"

"Oh, it's coming along all right."

Of course, as they kept digging into this great, big immense outcropping, the bigger it got. So then Getchell figured, "Well, golly sakes, I've got a mountain here and I'd better find out if I'm on sound ground." So he went down to San Francisco and began to checking

these section corners. Come to find out, all of this gold property was on railroad land. So he went to the commissioner for the Southern Pacific Land Company and wanted to know if they would sell him this particular section. This fellow said, "Nah, I don't want to sell you this railroad land. You miners give me a pain in the neck, anyhow. All you do is just interfere with the livestock producer."

Getchell said, "Well, I still want to buy some of this ground."

I've forgotten the man's name that was Southern Pacific Land commissioner at that time, but he said to Getchell, "Well, when you was at the Betty O'Neal and the Midas, you was always a good shipper on our railroads." And he thought he could get rid of him, so he says, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll sell you"—it was either 160 acres or a half section of 320 acres for this outcropping—"I'll sell it to you for forty dollars an acre."

Getchell said, "I'll take it." He thought he was going to get rid of him by asking this exorbitant price, so Getchell bought it.

So then Getchell came back, and by that time, why, Emmett had moved his wife, Dulcie, over to this mining camp. (She's still alive, by the way.) They built a road in there so they wouldn't have to do so much walking. Getchell drove up to the camp and he asked Dulcie where Emmett was. She said, "He's up there with the mining boys and they're working in that first tunnel." So Getchell went in and got ahold of Emmett, and he took him outside and he told him, he said, "Emmett, this property that you and I think we own, it's on railroad land." And he said, "I've just come back from San Francisco and I bought it."

Chase said, "Well, that puts me clear out of the picture, doesn't it?"

Getchell said, "No, no, no. You're still my partner, but here's what I want to do." He said, "When I start wheeling and dealing with this

property, I don't want to get involved in any kind of litigation or anything inasmuch as you and Ed Knight was part of the original discoverers. Ed sold me his interest, now I'd like to buy your interest, a quit-claim deed to your interest."

Chase said, "Well, goodness sakes, you own it. You can just tell me to get."

No, I don't want to do that," Getchell said. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you ten thousand dollars cash for your third interest."

Emmett said, "That's quite a gift from heaven."

Getchell said, "Let's not just you and I make this decision, let's go down and talk to Dulcie, your wife."

So they went down to camp and they discussed this with her and told her the situation. Dulcie said, "Well, that's really wonderful for you to give us that kind of money for something that we don't own and you own it all. So," she said, "I think it's only fair and right that we give you this one-third for that price, if you want to give us that money, and I'll be willing to sign the papers with Emmett." So they had the papers drawn up and they both concurred on the sale, so Getchell had it all.

The next time he went to Reno, he bumped into Wingfield. Now, this is interesting. He bumped into Wingfield, and Wingfield said, "How's your gold prospect coming, Getch?"

Getch said, "Oh, it's coming along fine. You know, George, it's gotten to the point now where, by golly, I think I'll give you half interest in it."

"You what?"

"Yep," Getchell said, "I'm going to give you half interest in it."

"Well, goodness sakes, you know I haven't got any money. I'm broke."

Getch said, "I know it, but I'm still going to give you half interest in this mine."

Wingfield said, "Well, what's the strings attached to it?"

Getchell said, "Oh, there's strings. Soon as we finish eating lunch here in the Golden, we'll go up in your office in the Reno National Bank and we'll discuss it."

So after they had their lunch, they went up in George Wingfield's office, and Getchell told him, he said, "Now, George, I want to give you a half interest in this mine, and I know that you haven't got any money, but," he said, "in your political life, and in your banking career, there's been some place, someone up and down the roads that you have traveled between here and New York and San Francisco that have told you that if, and whenever, any time, you should run across a big mine to let them know and they would come and take a look at it." Getchell looked at him, and he was wondering whether Wingfield could think back far enough to think of anybody that he had contacted on that line or not.

And George snapped his fingers, and he said, "Yeah, by gosh, come to think about it, I did." He said, "You know who that is?"

Getchell said, "No, I don't know, but I figured that someplace you'd met somebody that was in a position to finance a property of this nature and would have plenty of money to really put it on a producing basis."

And Wingfield said, "Yeah, I know a fellow by the name of Bernard Baruch, but before I can go to Bernard Baruch, I'm going to have to send out my brother-in-law, Roy Hardy, to take a check to see if this mine does have matter."

So Roy Hardy went out there, and he took samples in all of these various crosscut tunnels and the face of this outcropping, and took them back to Reno and had them assayed, and, by golly, they all ran a very high price in gold. And Roy thought that he had

been salted. He figured that he had actually been salted due to the outward appearance of this particular type of ore. So, without any falderal, or without any public announcement or anything, why, he slips back out there and takes some more samples without anybody knowing it, takes them back to Reno, and they all run just like the first ones. Hell, he was convinced.

So he went and told George Wingfield, his brother-in-law, that the best thing for him to do was to get on a plane and go back and see Bernard Baruch. So, by golly, Wingfield did. He went back to New York and he talked to Bernard Baruch, and Bernard Baruch said, "Well, I'll send my engineer out to take a look."

So this engineer, he slipped out, took some samples, and he thought he was salted, so he went and checked again, too. Then he went back to New York and told Bernard Baruch of this bi-cliff that was just nothing but low grade ore. He said, "It's complex ore. It's an arsenious-gold type of ore. You might, later on, have to roast it in order to get the mineral out of it."

Anyway, that's what happened as far as the gold mine is concerned. Then this outfit, I think it was the Newmont people, put up all the money. Of course, they formed a Getchell Mine Corporation, and these people put up \$1,125,300 to put in this mill, put in the power lines and everything, for seventeen percent of the stock. This stock was put in escrow in some bank with the idea in mind that Getchell and Wingfield was supposed to buy it back at a certain length of time, and if they didn't buy it back, why, it would be forfeited to this New York group. Of course, I don't know for sure, but I kind of think it was a little bit of tax evasion in connection with the transfer of this stock.

But getting back to this mining property, it was also agreed that Wingfield would

be the president of the corporation and Getchell would be the general manager, and that the property would be named the Getchell Mine. Of course, Getchell and Wingfield, they had the controlling interests in the whole picture, but it was agreed between them that the first monies that were produced from this property would be used to pay back this company that was doing the financing. So after they finally got to rolling, I think it was only six or eight months, they paid back this company that put up the money, and they have been declaring dividends ever since.

As luck would have it, when they declared limitations on the production of gold during the war, why, they got to fooling around over there, and they run across a great big immense deposit of tungsten which the government was in sore need of. So they started in to producing tungsten, but I'm getting ahead of my story a little bit here.

When they found out the immensity of this deposit, they immediately contacted the Southern Pacific Land Company and I think they bought about ten sections of land over there that was all adjoining along this vein system. Instead of paying forty dollars an acre for it, I think they got it for around about seventy-five cents an acre. They had been so successful and productive over there. They're still mining over there right now.

I think, due to Getchell's death, his estate had to be settled and Wingfield's estate had to be settled. Somehow or another, why, young George made some kind of a deal with this Goldfield Consolidated (they are the ones that are now operating the Getchell Mine) and they're shipping gold all the time from over there. I don't know what process they're using to extract that real fine gold out of that arsenic sulphur, sulphite ore, but they're getting it somehow.

Here's an interesting picture of Getchell and his personality. When this thing finally became unfolded—as far as building the mill—and they began to realize the wealth that was involved in that piece of property, Getchell went to Wingfield and he said, "You know, I feel guilty as far as Emmett Chase is concerned." He said, "I don't have any sympathy for Ed Knight, but as far as Emmett Chase is concerned, he's always been in my corner, and he's always done what I've asked him to do." With that thought in mind, he said, "George, don't you think we ought to build him a nice home over there at the mine and let him be a sort of a big shot or an overseer to kind of look after things at a very fine salary, say, as long as he lives?"

Wingfield said, "That's all right with me if it's all right with you, Getchell."

So that's what they did. They built him a nice home and he lived there for several years, and he got this nice salary and had to do very little work. They had some labor problems over there, and I think they put Emmett at the gate as a guardian to keep a lot of these rabble-rousers, troublemakers, out.

Then as time went on and they kept paying these dividends and everything, why, Getchell said to George one day, when they was having a little visitation, he said, "You know, George, I still feel guilty about Emmett Chase and this property." He said, "What I'd like to do is to give him about ten thousand shares out of our treasury stock."

Wingfield said, "Now, wait a minute, Getchell. You're just going too far here on this thing. I know that Chase was probably very instrumental in finding this property, and so forth, but I can't see us giving him ten thousand shares."

Getchell said, "Well, we've got plenty of treasury stock, and it wouldn't hurt either one of us."

"Well," George said, "it would hurt the dividends. We have to declare dividends, you know, and it would be a further distribution, expanded distribution, of these dividends."

So it went by for two or three weeks, and one day Getchell bumped into George, and George said, "You know, I've been thinking about that, where you want to give ten thousand shares to Emmett Chase. I'll tell what I'll do," he said. "You know, Roy Hardy helped discover that mine, too, my brother-in-law." He said, "If you will go along and give Roy Hardy ten thousand shares, I'll go along and let Emmett Chase have ten thousand shares."

Getchell said, "That's all right with me."

So that's what happened. They gave each one of those men ten thousand shares in connection with that Getchell Mine. And that stock went up to fourteen, fifteen dollars a share, so that was a pretty nice gift of \$150,000 to each one.

Of course, I think Emmett wasn't a very smart businessman, and everybody that came along had some kind of a deal to sell him a fancy patent or something, and Emmett kind of fell for it. Out of all that money that he realized from that stock, I don't think he left very much, but I do believe his wife is still getting some kind of a check from the Getchell Mine. Maybe I'm wrong, I don't know. But that's the story of Getchell, and his mining activity here in the state of Nevada.

He loved to hunt, too. He and a group of fellows became very good friends of Mr. Shoup, who used to be connected with the Nevada Division of the California State Automobile Association. He and Shoup and Howard Doyle and some of those fellows down there, they used to all go deer hunting together over around Monitor Valley and that country. They had a lot of fun.

Getchell, with his background in the theatrical field, was quite an entertainer. He used to give these parties and dances up at the Betty O'Neal when he was here in Battle Mountain, and he used to love to dance and to sing. That song, "Peggy O'Neal," well, they changed that to "Betty O'Neal" and that was sort of the main song for the Betty O'Neal camp. Getchell—I used to get a kick out of him. He used to sing, and, oh, golly, he'd really sing out that Betty O'Neal.

He had a nice home up there, and he had one of the best baseball teams in the state of Nevada, and, of course, the Betty O'Neal mining company sort of financed it. There was a lot of real fine professional ball players on that team, and they didn't have to do hardly any work. He was trying to build a pipeline, I think, from a place called Whiskey Canyon over at the Betty O'Neal mill. He never made them work too hard. All he was interested in was winning that Humboldt Valley League title, as far as baseball was concerned.

Then he became interested in the Battle Mountain State Bank—he used to be a stockholder in that bank. There used to be a fellow by the name of George Southward. He married Mrs. Jenkins. When she died in 1918, Southward operated the W. T. Jenkins holdings for several years. Finally he decided to sell out, and Getchell bought his interest in the bank, the Battle Mountain State Bank, and also bought his stock in the W. T. Jenkins Company. His prime reason for buying that stock in the W. T. Jenkins Company was in order to be in a bargaining position as far as the water that was coming, out of Lewis Canyon. We used to have these drought years, and to operate any kind of a mill you had to have water. Of course, when he got ahold of that stock, why, naturally, Louise Marvel and those in the W. T. Jenkins Company were rather upset about it. So they had him come

to their home to visit and discuss the problem. He openly told them, "I'm not interested in running your sheep or running your cattle or running your activities. All I'm interested in is that water. I want to get an acknowledgement from you folks that if and whenever I want some water out of that Lewis Creek, I can get it."

Well, they were happy to learn that, because even though water was essential to their big ranch, called the Martin ranch, down below Lewis Canyon, it wasn't so essential that they couldn't do a little bargaining to give Getchell the water that he needed. So they made some kind of arrangements. They took over that stock that Mrs. Marvel had, and got Getchell out of the picture, but just for a water right, and perhaps whatever money he paid this fellow Southward. That's a little interesting sidelight of Getchell's life and career.

I'd like to add a bit more about Noble H. Getchell and his political activities and how he was able to remain in a position as county chairman of Lander County of the Republican Party, and also state chairman, and how he kept his political machine active and on its toes to, in a sense, perpetuate himself in office.

In all of Noble Getchell's undertakings, regardless of whether it was in politics, or in any mining activities, or a business venture of any kind, he was meticulous in making absolutely sure that all details were being taken care of. On the political front, he always arranged to have certain lieutenants on the precinct level as well as on the county level. At the precinct level, naturally, those lieutenants looked after his position as county chairman and also as state senator, and he had men in these key positions that he could trust, so that he was a senator from Lander County for twenty years. I think that he was county chairman of the Republican



party here in Lander County for quite some time, too. I don't think that many years, but he did serve in that capacity for at least ten or twelve years. Then, as chairman of the Republican party on the state level, he had key personnel in every one of the counties to look after his power and his stature as far as maintaining himself for the people. In all the years that I've known Noble Getchell, I never did hear him make a political speech. In his activities, he would always get someone of consequence who was an eloquent speaker to do the job for him, and they didn't hesitate at all to praise his qualifications to be a leader, either on the county level or the state level.

An interesting thing happened here one year when Noble Getchell was running for the position of state senator. He had a very strong opponent who was a Democrat, but Getchell was so well-liked by his colleagues and fellow senators in the Nevada State Legislature that during the course of his campaign, he had one of the most outstanding Democrats in the northern part of the state come down here to Battle Mountain, at a big public rally and dance, to put in a good word for him from the platform in a speech. That person was none other than the honorable Senator John E. Robbins, who later on, I believe, became Democratic national committeeman from the state of Nevada.

By the way, while I mention his name, he was a very fine gentleman and also a wonderful friend of mine, and during the many years that I served in the legislature, I went to him many times for counseling and advice. It was through him that I learned much about procedures in connection with legislative matters, and I really feel highly honored that I had the privilege of knowing a person like John E. Robbins from Elko County.

Here is an interesting look at the legislature during the time that Noble Getchell was a Senator from Lander County. There were about nine outstanding senators that formed what was called or nicknamed the "bull bloc." As I remember, in this group there was John E. Robbins, William Dressler from Douglas County, a gentleman by the name of John H. Miller from Mineral County, and a young neophyte senator by the name of Walter Cox from Lyon County. In the senate there was seventeen representatives, one from each county. The magic number is nine, and in this "bull bloc" there was nine senators, and any legislation that was introduced, why, they had a signal system that if it was favorable, why, every one of them would put thumbs up; if it was unfavorable, why, thumbs down. It didn't make much difference whether a bill would come out of committee that was good or bad, when it hit the floor of the senate, it was either passed or rejected just by thumbs up or thumbs down by this "bull bloc."

As I stated in another part of this story, whenever you spoke of Noble Getchell, why, you also, in a sense, was speaking about George Wingfield. Whenever you spoke about George Wingfield, in a sense you was talking about Noble Getchell, because they became so close due to their activities in the Republican party.

As I remember George Wingfield, I would like to class him as one of the great benefactors of our state. When he came to our state and he landed in Goldfield, from what I've been told, he was a very, very poor man. Through his wits and his business capabilities, why, he was quite successful and acquired quite a large fortune in mining activities in that area. He broadened out his activities and entered into finance and built up this chain of banks in the state of Nevada. When I made that statement that he was a great benefactor of the state of

Nevada, it was proven, due to the fine support he gave to one of the main industries at that time, the livestock industry.

Of course, he was quite ruthless as far as a business deal was concerned. If you failed to live up to commitments, why, he wouldn't hesitate to take your property away from you if you had it up as security. He built some very fine edifices in this state. He had the Commercial Hotel in Elko. He had the Humboldt Hotel in Winnemucca. He had the Reno National Bank Building there on Second and Virginia Streets in Reno. He had the Golden Hotel in Reno, and he had the Riverside. And what other large buildings that he had throughout the state, I don't remember. Of course, he had these various banks. He had the bank in Tonopah. He had the one in Elko, and Winnemucca, and, of course, Reno. When the financial crash came, Wingfield had overextended himself in livestock loans, and we all know that livestock prices really hit the bottom.

I was warned by the Bamburgers who were an old family from the state of Utah. Prior to the crash, Clarence Bamburger and his brother Ernest were going through to San Francisco from Salt Lake. I was their petroleum distributor for the Associated Oil Products. I was working under them as the wholesale distributor in this area. They both stopped there at my place of business on Front Street here in Battle Mountain, and they both asked me where I was keeping my money.

And I asked them, "Why would you ask a question like that?"

They said, "Well, if you've got your money in Wingfield banks, why, the Wingfield banks are in a very precarious condition."

And I said, "Oh, I've got money scattered in several banks." I didn't have very much money, but I had it scattered. I didn't take their warning. The fact of the matter is, as

far as any financial institution like a bank is concerned, a serious run on a bank, even at this particular date and age, would really raise havoc with the bank. And I couldn't see any rhyme or reason for taking out money that I had in these banks, and I didn't know where the dickens to put it. I could have put it under a mattress or something like that, but I felt it was much safer to leave it in the banks. But I did have money in the Tonopah Bank, and I had money in the Reno National Bank, and I had money in the First National Bank in Winnemucca. All three of those were Wingfield banks. I also had money in this Battle Mountain State Bank. And all of them closed. Thank goodness we had built up a very fine credit rating.

And these oil companies, like the Texas Company and the Shell Company and the Standard Oil Company, they realized that the amount of money that we owed to them, we just couldn't afford to pay at that time, but they put through a ruling wherein they would keep our tanks filled. And then, as they would replenish these tanks, we'd have to pay for all that gasoline that we had sold. In other words, we were put on a cash basis. Then, as we gradually got back on our feet, we in turn could pay to these oil companies for the past indebtedness, which I thought was a very nice gesture on their part. Of course, they could have really raised Cain with all these business houses, and as far as service stations were concerned, they could have started suit and probably taken over the property to pay the indebtedness. But they didn't do it; they were very cooperative. They not only did that with the service station operators and owners and businessmen, but they also did that with many of the livestock people. There are a lot of livestock people in this northern part of Nevada that owed the oil companies quite a considerable sum of money, and had been in



the practice of paying monthly. But when they bumped up into this kind of condition, where the banks were closed, why, the oil companies were very cooperative and extended these livestock people the credit until such time as they would be able to sell their cattle or their wool crop or their lambs and things like that to pay their bills. That was the Depression as I can remember it.

I think that anyone who has studied finance will remember that Hoover was President at that time. He inaugurated this Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Even though these Wingfield banks were in this deplorable condition, the prices of livestock had hit the bottom and then they started to improve. I've heard it said by men that were well up in finance that if Wingfield had been given at least four more months' time, due to this aid that he could have received from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and this improvement in the price of the livestock, that there wouldn't have been a single one of his banks that would not have been able to pay off everybody. And they would have been able to continue on in their operation.

There is something else that is of interest, too, the very fact that Kirman, who was the owner of the First National Bank in Reno, was a very smart banker in that he knew what was going to happen. He was in a very fine financial condition when this depression hit. The greatest portion of the assets of that bank was liquid—they weren't tied up in livestock loans and they weren't tied up in real estate loans like the monies of the Wingfield banks. A bank of that kind, in my way of thinking, is not an asset to the state; it's a detriment. What good is a bank in any state or community if they don't participate in the business of the community by assisting the businessmen and help them to improve their businesses, or put money into loans that would be an

improvement to the area? But that particular statement would be argued for many hours.

Kirman, when the position of governorship came up, was influenced to run for governor. I've always claimed that Mr. Kirman is a very fine man, but he became governor for one purpose—to produce legislation that would put in branch banking in the state of Nevada. When this branch banking law was inaugurated, it wasn't but a few months afterward that the Bank of America took over the First National Bank, bought Kirman out. If Kirman had any other objective as far as being a political influence in the state of Nevada, he could have been readily reelected. But after he had accomplished what he went in there to do, putting in this branch banking law, he didn't want anything more to do with it—he quit! He made quite a lot of money by selling his bank to this Bank of America group. If (as I stated before) Wingfield had been given just a few more months, I think he would have gotten back on his feet.



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## MY POLITICAL CAREER

After I moved back to Battle Mountain, I took an active part in politics. Of course, my dad was always a Republican and so was my mother.

J. M. Hiskey and Neal S. Eason were the big wheels in those days, and so was N. H. Getchell. Of course, he was the senator from this county. Getchell was quite active here in Lander County. He was operating, I believe at that time, the Betty O'Neal properties and eventually he moved over to Midas.

I worked with Mr. W. G. Adams, who was cashier for the Battle Mountain State Bank, and there was many a county convention that I would walk in there with proxies sufficient to control the whole convention. The fact of the matter is, I could have elected myself county chairman or any other office that I would desire, as far as the county level was concerned. But I couldn't see any rhyme or reason to do a thing like that to either Mr. Hiskey or Mr. Eason because they were two very stalwart people in connection with supporting the Republican party. And it was amusing to me; they knew I had all these

proxies at this first meeting, and when it came time for nominations for county chairman, unhesitatingly, I got up and nominated J. M. Hiskey, and by acclamation, he was put back in office. The same thing happened as far as Neal Eason was concerned. The very fact that I did that later proved to be very beneficial to me because when I needed their help when I decided to enter politics and run for an office, well, both of them were in my camp, and they showed it. So it was, year after year, that I would go into these county conventions of the Republican party and have those proxies and could have just ruled the roost, but I didn't do it.

I have always felt that in connection with party politics, those people that have served their party loyally and have been out of pocket a lot of expense, like these two men were, what benefits they might have derived out of having those positions, I don't think it was worth even thinking about, other than just the glory of being county chairman of a political party, which didn't mean anything to me. I gained their favor by doing just exactly what I did.

Now, in collecting these proxies, we had only two precincts here in Battle Mountain, Argenta No. 1 and Argenta No. 2, and each precinct was entitled to so many votes at the county convention. The leaders from each precinct would hold precinct meetings. (Of course, these precinct mass meetings was very poorly attended, let's be frank, but there was enough to do it legally.) They would choose persons whom they thought might be interested in going to the county convention, but eventually it turned out that they didn't want to go, so they in turn would get their proxies, and these proxies, why, they were assigned to either me or someone else, split them, and we'd go to the county conventions in Austin. That's how we got the proxies.

In 1942 and four years previous to that, which would be 1938, Senator Getchell ran for office here in Battle Mountain, but he was living in Reno. It's very, very difficult as far as campaigning to elect somebody that's not even a resident of your county. If it hadn't been for the fact that we Republicans in this end of the county worked like dirty dogs, Getchell would have got beaten in '38. The opposition party realized where their weaknesses were, and so they planned on putting up a candidate that was a master politician, and without a question of a doubt, if Getchell had run again for that position, he would have got beaten and beaten very badly.

Well, due to the personal acquaintanceship I have had with Noble Getchell, I knew that if he would run for office and get beat, he would become very bitter and very vitriolic towards Lander County. Rather than have him undergo that experience, I decided that the best thing for me to do was to stick my neck out. I didn't really have any—well, I wanted to win, of course, but I didn't believe that I could win because it was my first venture

towards a political office as far as vote-getting is concerned. My opposition, by the way, was none other than Charlie Caldwell. Previously he had been an assemblyman from this county, and he was widely known throughout the county due to the fact that he had been in politics.

So Charlie and I tangled. He was a Democrat and I was a Republican. Believe it or not, our paths would cross every once in awhile, and, of course, we were still friends even though we were political enemies.

He'd say, "Well, how you doing, Rene?"

I'd say, "Well, I'm just about five votes behind you, Charlie, but I'm catching up." The last time I met him before election, I bumped into him out in Copper Canyon. There was quite a precinct out there at that time. I bumped into Charlie, and he asked me how I was doing in my campaigning. I said, "Well, I've picked up a little bit, Charlie. I'm only two votes behind you now." So believe it or not, when the election took place, they counted the ballots, and I won by two votes. That's pretty close. If just one person had changed their position and voted for Charlie rather than for me, we'd've been tied. That just shows you how important a person's vote is in any kind of an election campaign. You might not think your vote is worth anything, but it's the truth, it is.

So Charlie was figuring perhaps maybe having a recount and going through all the processes and troubles and trials and tribulations of a recount, and so forth. He went down to Reno, and evidently he must have talked to the wrong people because they talked him out of it. They were evidently on my side.

Did Mr. Getchell help me in that first campaign? Not to speak of. He was rather hurt that I challenged him. I didn't keep him from running; he could have run. He came to

me personally. He says, "Rene, I'd like to run for office again."

And I told him, I said, "No, Noble, we had a heck of a time electing you four years ago, and I'm afraid if you run again, you'd get beaten. I'll be brutally frank with you," I says. "If you get beat, you'll blame all of us and you'll be very resentful, and I'd rather run myself and have you back out gracefully. If there's going to be a beating in the Republican party, I'd rather take it than have you take it."

So he backed out of it. Of course, I think he exercised a little influence with the people in Austin and got me support down there because that was his stronghold. Consequently, I won that first election in 1942 by two votes and became the senator of Lander County.

I met quite a few people down there in that legislature, and they were friends of mine. One of them was Howard Browne—he used to be a district attorney of this county. He told me, he said, "You're only just going to be a one-term." Very encouraging, wasn't he?

But as it proved out to be, why, Caldwell figured that maybe he had done something wrong and maybe he'd've beaten me on the heat, so he filed against me the next time I came up for office. Why he filed as an independent, I don't know. He used to be a Republican, and then he changed to an independent, or filed as an independent, and then finally changed to a Democrat. I don't know whether our statutes at that particular time stipulated that you had to have voted a previous general election as a member of that party in order for you to file as a candidate from that party. Whether that statute existed at that time or not—I think that statute was enacted later on. At that time, when there was a big difficulty over Ken Johnson, the two Johnsons when they ran for United States Senator, I think that's when that law was

enacted. But there was nothing to prohibit you from going out and getting up the necessary signers to run as an independent. Now that's not only true as far as Caldwell was concerned in this instance, but it was true of this fellow Titlow down there in Nye County. He wanted to run as a Democrat and he found out that the statutes prohibited it because he voted as a Republican at the previous general election, so that's when he ran as an independent and won.

Anyway, the second time I ran against Caldwell, I really trounced him! I beat him by around 121 votes here in the county, which is quite a big plurality. That was in 46. That convinced Charlie that I was the most desirous as far as the people were concerned in Lander County.

My general approach to the campaign was just a case of personal contact. Charlie's approach, as far as campaigning was concerned, he used a tack that was not evidently a good, sound approach. He tried to make himself appear as an individual who had had some legislative experience, and he felt that as far as I was concerned, I had a lot to learn, and that if I was elected I would be controlled by big business. In other words, it belittled me. I didn't use that at all in my campaigning. I have never done that in any of my campaigns. I think that's a poor approach. I will never run down an opponent. If I can't say a good word about him, I won't say anything. I have tried to instill in the minds of the electorate of my county that I felt that I was capable and I felt that if I was elected—if they would give me that chance and that opportunity—I would do the very best I possibly could to protect their interests in that legislature.

An odd thing happened afterwards. It was maybe two years after I beat Caldwell. A fellow by the name of Earl Crouch and his

wife were living out in Kingston Canyon. I was out campaigning in the south end of the county and I went up Kingston Canyon, not particularly to see these people, but I went up there looking for votes. I stopped in at this house and the lady present was Mrs. Crouch. I introduced myself and I told her that I was out soliciting votes for state senator from Lander County and I'd appreciate anything that she and her husband would do for me. He didn't happen to be there; he was out working in a mining property or doing something nearby. I didn't stay very long, just passed the time of day, and I never even spoke of my opponent. So as I said before, a year or two afterwards, I happened to bump into Earl, and I think it was in Carson City. Earl came up to me and he introduced himself, and he said, "You know, René, my wife and I are the ones that elected you." Well, I have a lot of people say that inasmuch as I won by only the two votes. And he said, "You know why we voted for you?"

I said, "No, I don't know just exactly why you would vote for me. I did solicit your votes." I said, "You didn't happen to be there the day I was there."

And he said, "You know, it was rather a tough decision for my wife and I to decide whether to vote for you or Caldwell, and after we gave it a lot of thought, we decided due to the fact that you did not in any of your conversation with my wife run down your opponent, whereas, when he was out there, he ran you down, we decided that you would be the best man and would be our representative in that senate. And for that reason alone," he said, "was the reason that we voted for you." And perhaps there were other people that felt that same way. I have never in all the years that I've campaigned for office run down my opponent. I think it's poor politics because people become very resentful about your running down your opposition. So that's it.

So, now I've discussed the first two campaigns. I won the first term in 1942 against Charles Caldwell by two votes; then the following election, four years later, he decided to run against me again, and that time I beat him by 121 votes. The third time I really experienced a great pleasure by going back into office unopposed. That was really a politician's dream, to be able to go back in without having any opposition.

The fourth term election, the person that ran against me was Dick Magee. He was from the south end of the county. There seemed to have been some kind of a feeling towards me on account of this county seat movement that was rather upsetting to them. They decided that I should have some opposition, and so they convinced Richard Magee to run against me. Dick wasn't a very good politician, and he wasn't a very good campaigner, so consequently, I didn't have too much of a battle with him.

Then, the following election, the person that chose to run against me was a fellow by the name of Ed Lauritzen. Now Ed Lauritzen, up until the time he decided to run against me, had always been a lobbyist for the labor interests, especially the CIO. He was very active as a laborite. During the previous sessions for this particular campaign, we had my colleague, William Swackhamer, who was in the assembly. We had worked very diligently to try to obtain more monies for our respective counties. I was serving on the finance committee, and it was during the session previous to that election that we had put through a bill that gave to each county a certain amount from the gambling industry which was known as the table tax, which netted the people of Lander County a very handsome sum and helped them take care of things that was badly needed.



Mr. Lauritzen at that particular time was a member of the board of county commissioners, and rather selfishly he utilized these funds to build up his own prestige and his own gallantry before the electorate of the county. But he failed to let the people know that it was the legislators in the state of Nevada that secured these funds that put him in the position where he could get certain benefits for the county of Lander.

One thing that he did for the south end of the county was to convince them that, through his prestige and his power, he bought them a very beautiful Cadillac ambulance. Of course, there wasn't any medical facilities at the south end of the county. The county hospital at that particular time was more of a first aid station than anything else. I do believe they had a hospital matron down there, but there wasn't any doctor or anything. It was Ed Lauritzen that got them this \$10,\$12,000 beautiful Cadillac ambulance. I do believe that an ambulance, either a General Motors ambulance such as a Chevrolet, or a Ford, or some other vehicle of more moderate costs, would have taken care of their requirements just as well as this immaculate Cadillac, but that was his method of campaigning.

An unfortunate thing happened a year or so before that, when this county seat issue came up again. They decided that the only fair way to handle this county seat movement problem was to circulate a petition wherein it would be requested that an election be held and let the people of the county decide whether the county seat should be moved from Austin to Battle Mountain. Very unwisely on my part, but thinking more as a private citizen, that it was a fair answer to the problem that existed, and not thinking of my position as representative of the county as a whole, I signed the petition. The people in

the south end of the county were very, very resentful that in my position as senator I had expressed myself by signing this petition to bring this to an election, but there was something behind the scenes that these people in Austin didn't know.

There had been legislation passed which I was aware of. When we changed over from the old laws of the state of Nevada to the new Nevada Revised Statutes, due to my acquaintance with Jeff Springmeyer and Russ McDonald in preparation of these new revised statutes, I had asked them to make absolutely sure that in any movement of any county seat that the law be very, very definite as to the requirements that would have to be met in order to bring about either an election or an act of legislature, or anything like that, to move the county seat. I always felt that as far as the county seat was concerned, many times, grudgingly, people would move the county seat and afterwards would be very sorry for such action.

Well, acting upon my request, Russ McDonald and Mr. Springmeyer incorporated in the statutes a conflict, and I knew this. Now this is, in a sense, a very deep secret that I have not in any way divulged to anyone before. I knew when I signed the petition that there would be a very serious fight relative to moving the county seat and that there would be a lot of ill feeling about it. I also knew that the people of Austin and the south end of the county, as this fight progresses, eventually it would take it to the Supreme Court, which they did. And, due to the conflict that was written in the law, the election was called . The Supreme Court of the state of Nevada said there was a conflict in the law and they couldn't hold their election because it didn't conform to certain time limits, and the result was the election was called off. So the county seat was saved for Austin.

As I've already stated, the people of Austin didn't know this, and they were still very resentful towards me because I had signed this petition. Yet, behind the scenes I had done more to protect their county seat than they ever knew.

So Ed Lauritzen, in campaigning, made commitments to the people of Austin that, as far as he was concerned, he would not work towards moving the county seat. And he made commitments to the people in the north end of the county that if he was elected, he would help to move the county seat. Due to this county seat issue, the people of Austin really went all out for Ed Lauritzen. I knew that as far as the Battle Mountain area was concerned that I would get about a fifty-fifty break. I figured maybe Ed Lauritzen would beat me a few votes, but I had to have that Austin support to win the election. I went to the people in Austin and campaigned, and they would not listen to me for any rhyme or reason. I tried to convince them that they should support me. I used all kinds of outside influence, people that were loyal to Austin and so forth, to try to get them to change their minds, but even as hard as I campaigned, why, Lauritzen beat me, and I think the record shows by thirty one votes.

So Ed Lauritzen went to the legislature, the senate, and was sworn in, and, of course, I had a lot of friends down there in that senate who had known Ed Lauritzen for the simple reason, as I said before, that he had been very active down there as a lobbyist for the labor people. Then Ed got down there and became senator from Lander County, he soon found out that it was a lot different working on the floor of the senate compared to working as a lobbyist. He spoke to one of my good friends (I don't mind mentioning his name), W. Howard Gray, who's always been an ardent worker for big business, Kennecott Copper

Corporation, and has been very watchful over the Nevada Industrial Insurance funds to make sure that the big business was protected. That was his job; and he was a very close friend of mine, too.

Ed Lauritzen made a remark to W. Howard Gray one day. He said, "Howard, you know the biggest mistake I ever made in my life was when I decided to file and run against Rene' and beat him." He says, "I'm lost down here. There's lots of things I would like to do for labor, but I just don't know how to do it or how to go about it. And," he says, "during the time I was a lobbyist, with Rene's help as the senator from Lander County, he and I working as a team, we were the ones that were instrumental in putting through the industrial disease act called the silicosis act. Well, he and I was working as a team on some occasion previous to my being elected," he said. "He and I worked together and we put through the collar-to-collar bill." And he said, "As I remember it, during World War II, there was a condition existing around the air bases, at Las Vegas and Reno, wherein as you remember," he told Howard, "as you'll remember, all wages was frozen by presidential decree. However, any wages that were in conflict or wherein the legislature would enact a law raising certain minimums, the state law took preference." He said, "Through Rene's efforts, the first law that was ever passed by the state of Nevada raised the minimum salary for women in the state of Nevada."

What he'd told Howard was certainly the truth. In investigating the conditions as far as the wage scale that these women were being paid there in and around the city of Reno (their husbands were working out at Stead Air Force Base—and they were just a bunch of kids that just got married), I went to different drugstores, and different business houses to check on the hourly wage rate that was being

paid these young women whose husbands were out at the base. Some of them were being paid twenty-five cents an hour; some of them paid thirty-five cents an hour; even some of the chambermaids that were at the Golden Hotel were only paid around about forty cents an hour. In discussing these wage rates with some of these businessmen, they said, "We realize these wage rates are ridiculously low and we would like to have them raised, but we can't go into conflict with the federal law. If the state would put through some kind of legislation to establish a minimum, we would certainly go along with it."

Now these girls, these young married women, believe it or not, were so destitute as far as monies were concerned (their husbands wasn't making hardly any money out at the base as privates and corporals and so forth), these women were, and maybe I shouldn't say this in this tape recording, but they were selling their souls in order to get enough money to survive. That was the condition that existed.

So with this knowledge, I appeared before the labor committee of both houses, the assembly and the senate, and gave them these facts, and it was through my efforts that we raised those minimum salaries to, I think at that time, around seventy-five cents an hour. These women, for instance these maids that were working at the Golden Hotel, when they got their first pay envelope, there were many of them came to me and they had tears in their eyes, thanking me for bringing about such a gift from heaven, as they called it.

An odd thing happened relative to Ed Lauritzen. He got himself in a trap by promising the people at the south end of the county that he would exercise every bit of his influence to prohibit any change in the statutes relative to the county seat movement. Then, by the same token, (he]

came up here to the north end of the county and told these people that the first thing he would do would be to work toward passing legislation to change the statutes so the county seat could be moved. (As I stated before, the people of the state of Nevada had voted in annual sessions. I think that was the first off-year annual session under that particular law, which was the sixtieth session, 1960.) Mr. Lauritzen was working out here at the barium property, owned and controlled by the Foods Machinery Corporation. I honestly and sincerely believe he, Ed, was a very strong, healthy man. Of course, when your time comes, why, that's it. Anyway, he had this heart disturbance, but I believe that he had a premature death primarily due to the fact that he was so worried about these two commitments that he had made to the people of Lander County. I think it was very upsetting to him, and he worried so much about it that it upset his health, upset his rest, and the result was this heart disturbance. Maybe I'm completely wrong, but in any kind of activity, political or otherwise, you cannot, under any circumstances, talk out of both sides of your mouth. If you do, you're going to trap yourself and find yourself out in left field—and get hurt. Now that's just exactly what happened to Ed. Ed was still a good friend of mine, believe me. Heck, when he beat me that first time, he and I were down here at the bar and we really celebrated. He celebrated his victory, and I celebrated my defeat.

He knew, he found out by being down there in the legislature, that there was more than just having a seat in that senate in order to help get the job done. When Ed had this heart problem and he passed out of the picture, the county commissioners had to make the appointment to that particular office. Of course, Ed Lauritzen was a Republican, and so was I. They came to me and asked me if I

would accept the unexpired term; it would be for that regular off-year session until the next general election— if I would accept the appointment. They felt that inasmuch as I had had legislative experience and I was a Republican that I would be the best one to consider as far as making this appointment. So I made application to formal procedures and was appointed to take that off-year session and have to run at the next session.

Then the next election that took place was, I believe, in '60. That would be correct for the simple reason that Ed had served in '59, which was a regular session, and then the '60 was an off-year session, which was held in January. Then we had the general election that fall. So that would be the case.

My good friend, Dan Shovelin, the Irishman down the street, he decided that he would take me on. Dan has been a very, very good friend of mine and also a very ardent Democrat. In many of the years that I ran for office, my good friend, Senator Pat McCarran, who had an influence with Dan, would arrange with Dan to at least put up a weak candidate to run against me and kept Dan from being too active to get me defeated. I wasn't surprised. Senator McCarran had died and I knew that a great influence would be brought to bear on Dan Shovelin to run against me, and that's just exactly what happened. Dan is a very good campaigner. He started in ringing doorbells and going from house to house. He's been in a business here in Battle Mountain for many, many years and he has been able to become pretty well acquainted with a lot of the people here in this area. He was a Democrat and a very staunch Democrat. All this group of people that came into mid-Reese River, these farmers from Oklahoma and Texas and Arizona, they were all Democrats and they didn't know Dan Shovelin from R. W. Lemaire, and,

consequently, they voted the party ticket rather than knowing the qualifications of the two candidates. The result of that election: I think I beat Dan by only four votes. It was that close.

Two years went by again. Dan figured, well, maybe there's some spot that I overlooked where I should have campaigned more thoroughly. But in the meantime a lot of these people that had moved into this area had become better acquainted with me, and so that following election, two years later, when he ran against me again, why, I think I beat him pretty fair, by thirty-four votes. So that's the various problems that I have had maintaining myself in a position as senator.

Here's an observation that my wife has often made. She said, "You know, old senators never die, they just get reapportioned." And that's how they got rid of me! This reapportionment problem was really a serious thing that hit the state of Nevada. We had to resolve it as equitably as we possibly could to meet the rulings of the court. I think that it would be very easy for anyone that wants to look up the record to find out that, due to the population factor, the senatorial district from which I came was eventually determined to consist of four counties, Pershing, Humboldt, Lander, and Eureka.

There were many people that came to me and wanted me to run for senator again from this district, but I had served the state of Nevada in the senate for twenty-three years, and as most people know, there is the legacy that has been handed down to me by my parents and grandparents here in Lander County. At my age I thought it would be more advisable to let some younger person represent these four counties, and so I yielded to my good friend, the honorable John Fransway, who was from Humboldt County previous to the reapportionment. I knew

that he wouldn't have any problems as far as running for that particular office, if those people of his own county supported him like they should.

So, taking all these things into consideration, those are the main reasons why I decided that I would kind of get out of the political picture and sit back and let the other man do the work.

The last session when we finally adjourned sine die, it was sort of a "crying towel" session because there was many senators that knew it was going to be their last appearance on that senate floor as a senator, and it's a memory that I will never forget. There were many people who felt that with a larger representation in the senate from Clark County and a larger representation from Washoe County and a lesser representation from the "cow counties," that our state would find itself in serious trouble., I made this observation from the senate floor, that I felt that as far as the general welfare of the state of Nevada was concerned, that with the caliber of men that we were leaving behind us, and that I knew would be elected, or would come over from the assembly, that the "cow counties" and the people of the state of Nevada wouldn't have too much to worry about, because these men were primarily interested in looking after the general welfare of the state of Nevada—and then, perhaps, maybe looking after the best interests of their county later. And I think that's true of life, whether its on a neighborly basis or whether its on a county basis or whatever the occasion might be. Any time any county decides in their own way of thinking that they should hog it all, it becomes very detrimental to the rest of the state. In other words, I feel that the counties of the state of Nevada should be neighborly counties, that they should be trying to help each other. Now, for instance, here in Lander County, we have

had a very serious impact as far as an influx of people due to our mining activity. And I knew, years and years ago, that Clark County, due to the impact that they had down there with the building of the dam and people moving in there and expansion of the Strip hotels, and so forth, that they had a serious problem relative to their schools, and I know now that these men that we have in the legislature with just the actions that they have taken in this past session— that the people of the state of Nevada don't have too much to worry about. It's only those greedy, self-centered politicians that are more interested in perpetuating themselves in office that are a detriment to our state and not those that are real statesmen. I think that most of the men and women that are now in that legislature, whether it be in the senate or in the assembly, they are, nearly all of them, real statesmen.

I'd like to go back to my legislative experiences and bring out a few of the little things that happened that I enjoyed. My first session in the legislature was in 1943. E. P. Carville was governor of the state and Vail Pittman was our lieutenant governor. Even though I was from a small county, I was pretty much on my toes and I wanted to serve on the finance committee. Senator Dressler from Douglas County was chairman of the finance committee and he was a big wheel. He was one of the old "bull bloc" members. I don't know how it came to pass, but it was finally decided that they would increase the total number of the senate finance committee from five to seven to make room for me. Believe it or not, Senator Walter Cox, who was the president of the sophomore class when I was president of the freshman class at the University the time we had the big hay ride out to Moana Springs, he and I went at it again hammer and tongs. He wanted to be on finance, and he had a little bit more seniority than I did.



In order to accommodate me, they decided that they would increase the total number of senators on the finance from five to seven. The Democratic party really objected to that very seriously; they said, for the simple reason that it was objectionable to them, that it made the committee too large and too unwieldy.

So, in order that I would be satisfied, they decided that they would create an aviation committee in the senate. To get me out of there as far as being a member of the finance committee, they created this aviation committee, the first aviation committee that ever served in the senate of the state of Nevada, and they put me in as chairman of that.

Due to the conflict that existed between Walter Cox and I, why, we went along for two or three weeks until finally he wouldn't speak to me and I wouldn't speak to him. It was childish; it was ridiculous. So I got ahold of Walter one day, and I said, "Say, Walter, I think it's about time you and I got together and had a little talk." We went in one of the committee rooms and we discussed our problems, going clear back to the Moana Springs hay ride. We resolved our differences and the end result was that he and I became very, very close friends. Well, he got to serve on finance, and I got to be chairman of the aviation committee, so everything was fine and dandy.

Then as time went on in that particular session, about the fourth week, the secretary for Governor Carville came up and said, "The governor would like to see you."

So I figured, oh, my goodness, what have I done wrong now? So at the appointed hour I went down to the governor's office, and, of course, Governor Carville was from Elko County and he knew all of our family real well. I didn't know what the dickens was coming, but anyway, he got up from behind the governor's desk and he came around and

he put his arm around me. I was telling him all about my ambitions as far as the state of Nevada was concerned, and that I didn't want to make any mistakes, and so forth and so forth. He came around and he put his arm around me and he said, "You know, Rene, it's certainly been enjoyable talking to you. But," he said, "I kinda think you're taking it a little bit too seriously."

I said, "What do you mean by that?"

He said, "Well, you know our forefathers were pretty smart men. When they created this present government of ours, there had to be three branches. The legislative branch can make all kinds of mistakes, and the executive branch can make mistakes, but regardless of the mistakes that either one of those branches of our government make," he said, "they eventually correct themselves." And he said, "Sure, you're going to make some mistakes up there, but just do the best you can, and I'm sure that everything will work out all right."

So I always remembered that little conversation that I had with Governor Carville and it stayed me in good stead throughout my years in that legislature. You make a mistake once in a while, but if you're honest and sincere and want to do what's right, most of the time, at least ninety-nine percent of the time, you're right. And that's the record I tried to establish. Of course, I've made mistakes, sure, but I think most of the legislation that I've supported and worked for has been for the best interests of the people of the state of Nevada.

I've forgotten now when Carville was appointed senator— but, anyway, he was appointed United States Senator to fill Senator Scrugham's unexpired term. He resigned as governor July 24, 1945, and Vail Pittman assumed the position as governor inasmuch as he was lieutenant governor, and he appointed Carville as United States Senator of the state



of Nevada. I think the following election, Cliff Jones was elected as lieutenant governor (election of November 5, 1946.) And Cliff was a very ambitious young fellow, a young attorney, a Democrat, and he was a very good presiding officer. That was when Clark County was having such a terrible time with schools and this big impact of population.

One evening I had General May with me and Senator Ken Johnson. We drove over to Reno and we went to the Riverside Hotel for dinner. While we were in there, why, we bumped into the lieutenant governor, Cliff Jones. I went up to Cliff and I said, "Cliff, isn't there some way that we could get members of this legislature down to Las Vegas and give them a Gray Line bus tour to see the terrific impact of the people that are coming into that area in order that we would be more fully briefed as to these problems that we are having to consider up here in this legislature that pertain to Clark County?"

He said, "Well, I think it could be arranged."

I said, "Well, here's General May. Maybe he'll take these Nevada Air National Guard planes and fly us all down there."

He said, "I'd be glad to." So he made a commitment as far as the transportation problem was concerned.

Then it became a question of housing and feeding the legislators if we would go down there to look at this problem. So he says, "How will we extend an invitation to both the assembly and the senate to make this visit?"

I said, "Well, don't you have a chamber of commerce down there?"

"Oh, yes, we have a very active chamber of commerce."

I said, "Well, contact them and have them send up an invitation by telegram so there will be a written record."

And he said, "That will be a good idea."

So he got ahold of the powers that be in Las Vegas—and that's just exactly what came to pass. They sent up a telegram, a lengthy telegram, inviting both houses of the legislature to go to Las Vegas and be their guests for a two-day weekend so we could visit and they would take us around and show us all the industries that were coming into that area, and the housing problems, and the school problems, and everything else. So everything went along fine.

We took off in the airplane, and we all flew down there. I had Etta come from Battle Mountain to Reno, and she flew down via Bonanza. All the wives of the legislators were invited on this trip, too, and that's why I called Etta on the phone and asked her to come down. She couldn't ride in the Nevada Air National Guard plane, but she could come down by private transportation, which she did.

So they took care of us royally; they rolled out the red carpet, believe me. They had these bus tours, and they took us to these various shows on the Strip and downtown Las Vegas, and wined us and dined us, and gave us all the briefing as to the problems that existed down there. It was a wonderful happening as far as giving all of these legislators an on-the-spot picture of the problems that were existing there at that time.

So then we returned to the legislature and went to work and drafted necessary legislation to help them. Of course, anything that would help Clark County would also help the rest of the state of Nevada. It had to be general legislation. Out of that particular visitation there was some very important legislation drafted, and passed, that was beneficial not only to Clark County, but the state of Nevada as a whole. But that's what they called the "lost weekend." That was how it started, and that's what happened and the reason why it

happened, and I'm proud that I had part of that "lost weekend" trip.

An interesting note to me: during the first session I attended, in '43, I think the total number of bills that was passed, the ones in the senate and the ones in the assembly, the volumes were not over an inch thick, as compared to the volumes that have been passed here in recent years wherein the volumes passed by the assembly necessitated two volumes and were averaging about three to five inches thick. But that shows you that during the war with Japan there just wasn't much to do. We were just sort of marking time because we had to curtail all of our expenses as far as capital investments were concerned.

As time went on, we felt that if this war would become finalized and many of our soldiers and sailors and marines would be returning from this war, we might have an unemployment problem. So Senator Robbins and Senator Haight and myself discussed the feasibility of introducing necessary legislation to create a reserve fund. In other words, we would try to maintain our tax level about the same, but still have these monies that the state would need to expand facilities, as far as capital investments are concerned, at the state hospital and at the prison and at the Elko school and needed office space in and around Carson, and also office space that would probably be needed down in the southern part of the state. We introduced this legislation, and if I remember it correctly, better than a million dollars was in this reserve fund for building purposes to meet the needs of the state in its expanding capital improvements program. I feel kind of proud about that.

### **IMPORTANT LEGISLATION**

I think one of the most important major pieces of legislation enacted during my

numerous terms in the senate was the creation of the Purchasing Department. There had been quite a lot of dissension about that among the merchants throughout the state of Nevada. Even though I was a senator at that time, I was a merchant, too, and I have always felt that there's many people throughout the state of Nevada who were not interested in selling merchandise due to the pork barrel type of government that sometimes existed. I'm not putting a finger on any executive department, but nevertheless, there was a pork barrel deal in connection with purchasing of goods for the state of Nevada up until the time this purchasing department was created. Now, I felt this way: here's your farmers and the ranchers, comparing their tax problems against mine. I'm selling, in my business, tires and tubes that the state would buy, and automobiles and trucks, and so forth. Well, if the state would create this purchasing department and buy all of these on a bid basis, they would be saving the state of Nevada hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, and it could be reflected in either lower tax rates or in more benefits as far as the requirements of the people of our state.

So I was an active legislator that worked towards the creation of this purchasing department, and I think that was one of the finest pieces of legislation that's been enacted in our legislature.

Another piece of legislation that I considered important for the health and general welfare of the people of our state was the silicosis act. I think that was very outstanding. I played a very important part in that, as I remember it, because when the bills was considered pertaining to that problem, I was either a member of the labor committee or chairman of the labor committee.

I had known, due to the association that I have had with the mining people throughout

the state of Nevada, that there have been many instances where these miners that worked in open pit mining, or underground mining, didn't have the necessary protection by the companies, or they were working, unprotected, on their own, on a leasing basis. They were young and they would feel that everything was going all right, yet they would contract this dust on their lungs, and the end result was that later on they became incapacitated and couldn't do a full day's work. They were men with families; they were men that had been good taxpayers, good citizens, but when they reached that point as far as their lungs were concerned, they couldn't do a good day's work. Then they were not accepted by any of these big mining companies, and it was really a serious problem.

The first approach that was made to the enactment of some kind of protection for these silicotics was a bill that was introduced by Charles Russell and myself. I believe we took some funds out of the Nevada Industrial Insurance fund, the overall fund, to set this thing up. We were able to put that bill through both houses. It went down to the governor's office after the session was over and Governor Carville vetoed it. Governor Carville said it was unconstitutional to take any funds out of the Industrial Insurance fund because that was the money that was held in trust. It was in conflict with the law and in conflict with the constitution of the state of Nevada, and for that reason he vetoed it. But regardless of the fact that he based his reasoning on those facts, I knew he was in serious trouble politically because that was one piece of legislation that labor had been fighting for in our legislature for many, many years. This proved to be true when he ran for office again. He was very soundly beaten, and it was the labor influence that beat him.

Two years later another bill was introduced. When the bill came back up at the next session,

we discussed the problem and we sustained the governor's veto due to the probability that maybe it was unconstitutional, but we enacted a new law, a new approach to starting the show on the road as far as protecting these industrial diseases. Rather than taking the monies out of the Industrial Insurance fund, we appropriated \$5,000 out of the state general fund, with the understanding that as the premiums began to come in for this protection that was going to be given these men that were working in the mines and in bakeries and as painters (it was a broad coverage), as these premiums began to come in, why, this money would be repaid into the general fund. The premiums that would be coming in would be self-sustaining as far as taking care of these people that might be involved in some kind of industrial insurance problem. So that's the history of that act that went through.

I think I mentioned before that Ed Lauritzen played a very important part working with me in the enactment of that particular law, he criticized me very severely because when we had this hearing, we had that senate chamber just jam-packed. I asked him a lot of questions about his own family. Now he lost either one or two brothers from silicosis and I knew this. I asked him a lot of questions that maybe, in a sense, was embarrassing to him, but nevertheless, it was essential to put across to these legislators the gravity of incurring silicosis in connection with the mining. I've always felt that these men that work in the mines, they produce a virgin wealth. They produce a wealth—they're not taking it away from anybody. It's new wealth. Inasmuch as they have done an outstanding job in producing this new wealth, I felt that they should have some kind of protection, maybe not necessarily for themselves as much as it would be for their families. So we

incorporated this whole industrial disease act along with the other insurance that is handled by the Nevada Industrial Insurance section of our state government. And it has proven to be quite a wonderful boon to these people that have worked in the mines, and also painters, and bakers, and carpenters, too, that have run into some kind of a dust problem. And, of course, now, under the Nevada Industrial Insurance program, there are certain benefits for companies and corporations which are very much interested in safety and general health and welfare for their employees. They get a kickback on their premiums annually on an experience record which is very beneficial.

Actually, there wasn't any real opposition to enactment of the Industrial Insurance Act. For instance, the large mining companies, especially the Kennecott Copper Corporation, had a program of insurance that perhaps would be better than the one we passed. The only opposition that existed against the act was that they wanted to make doubly sure that they wasn't going to be forced to come into this deal. That was actually the only opposition.

I think the bill was introduced a second time wherein they took the money out of the general fund, as sponsored by five senators. But Charlie Russell and I, we didn't have anything to do with the introduction of the second bill, but I've always been quite proud of that particular bill.

Then there is the collar-to-collar bill which a lot of people don't know too much about. In large mining operations where these miners have to go deeply underground or they have to go down into these vast pits, usually the mine operators wouldn't start their time card until they had actually started work, whether it was at the face of a tunnel or the bottom of a shaft or a bottom of a big open pit. Well, in some of these pits like over there

in Ely and Ruth, it would take sometimes as long as an hour and a half to go from the lip of the pit down to the bottom of the pit in order to start work. And these men were having to utilize their own time to go that distance, not only down to work, but back up to the lip of the pit or to the portal of the tunnel or the mouth of the shaft, whatever the case might be, and they weren't being paid for it. The fact that the pits had got bigger and the tunnels had got longer and the shafts had got deeper, and I felt that these men should be paid from the time that they appeared at the portal of the tunnel or at the collar of the shaft or at the lip of the pit.

Here is one instance where Noble Getchell really became provoked with me. He asked me to vote against the measure, and I told him that I felt in my own conscience that it was for the best interests of the people of the state of Nevada, especially these miners, that they be granted this type of legislation. And it passed very readily. And that was another bill that was sponsored by our labor committee, and in which the do was very much interested, and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Union, and for which Ed Lauritzen thanked me very much for my hand in helping put it through.

There's many things that I have done in the years that I have been in the legislature that have been very, very helpful to labor. The fact of the matter is, I think the last time I talked to Lou Paley, who was executive secretary of the combined AFL-CIO, he made this remark. He said, Rene, we're certainly going to miss you because you have always been a very favorable person as far as labor is concerned."

And there is a strange thing about these fellows that are down there lobbying for labor, whether they're working for the CIO, or the A! of L, or the railroads, or whatever the case may be. I have always given those fellows to understand that as long as I was a senator

from Lander County, that anything that they would come in and ask for that was sound, was reasonable, that would be beneficial for the people of the state of Nevada as a whole, I would support it all the way down the line, but anything that they would ask for that I felt that was absolutely silly and detrimental to the interests of the people of our state, I said, "I'll fight you fellows all the way." And with that kind of an understanding with these labor lobbyists, I never had a single worry whatsoever. They were always my friends.

Even when the governor (Russell), when he called this special session (1958) in order to extend the benefits in connection with unemployment, James Ryan was there, and Lou Paley. After we had had several hearings—it was a special session called expressly for that—but anyway, we had several hearings on it and we broadened the benefits under unemployment and extended the time limit of the unemployment. I have been very much in favor of that particular law, although I've criticized some of the people that have asked for benefits under the act when I feel that they're taking advantage of it, calling it "rocking chair money." But nevertheless, before we finally took a vote on it, why, I made it a point to go to Ryan and also to Paley and to ask them if it was in accord with their thinking, and met the requirements of those who might become unemployed. They were very pleased with it, so I said, "Well, that being the case, it will go through without any opposition," and it did. It went through.

One thing I've always been interested in as far as legislation was concerned is laws that pertain to the advancement and expansion of aviation throughout our state. During World War II I tried to enlist in the armed services, but due to a physical ailment, I wasn't accepted, so consequently, I devoted my energies towards Civil Air Patrol and

also to the selling of bonds. The fact of the matter is, I've been a bond sales chairman of Lander County ever since the savings bonds program was started. But getting back to the aviation end of it, I think I stated that I served as chairman of the first aviation committee that was ever created in the senate. It was during the time that I was chairman of that committee that certain legislation was introduced to levy a tax on aviation fuels that would be applicable to all the airlines. In order to find out just exactly what it would mean to the state, we held one hearing, and one hearing only, in which we invited all of the airlines to be present. That meeting was held in Las Vegas. (This was in the early days. As I remember it, the only active Strip hotel at that time was called the El Rancho.) But at this meeting, which we held in the city hail building there in Las Vegas, we ran up against a stone wall. These commercial airlines (and without a question of a doubt, they were honest in their statements), they stated that even though they were flying across the state of Nevada, across the southern tip, and across from Reno to Wendover, they could carry enough fuel that they could purchase in California and in Utah and in Arizona so that they wouldn't have to refuel in this state, and that if we enacted any kind of legislation that would tax their fuels that that would be exactly what they would do. So they proved to us without a question of a doubt that it would be safer for the passengers, due to overloaded planes and so forth, that it would be better that they still have the privilege of refueling in the state of Nevada whenever the occasion demanded it without any tax.

We did enact a law later on in which there was a tax levied on aviation fuels for the sole purpose of creating special funds. These funds would be used to improve and expand landing strips throughout the state of Nevada. I think



that Reno has been very successful in taking a lot of this money to further its own airport, and I know Las Vegas has, and I know Elko has, but I don't think any of the other smaller counties have been able to take advantage of any of those funds. What we tried to do by legislative act was to give the state highway department control of those funds so they could build landing strips in various parts of our state and then with state road building and maintenance equipment, they could also maintain these strips without too much effort. They would be used as emergency strips in case an airman ever got in trouble. I don't know what the status of the present laws are relative to this.

When Charles Russell was the senator from White Pine County (and I do believe it was the first session that I attended, 1943), there was a doctor in Reno whose name was B. H. Caples, I believe. He was a specialist in gynecology. He was given the assignment by the Nevada medical association to come over and endeavor to have introduced into the legislature a premarital examination law. I think Senator A. V. Tallman was chairman of the public morals committee.

I had known Dr. Caples for several years, and inasmuch as I had met him before, he came to me and asked me if I would introduce this piece of legislation. Well, I knew that it would be quite a new piece of legislation, that it could create quite a lot of problems as far as hearings and so forth, and inasmuch as I was very much inexperienced, I asked him if he would go down and get Senator Tailman, who was chairman of the public morals committee, to consider it and maybe introduce it into committee measure.

So sure enough, he went down to Senator Tallman's desk and he sat there with Senator Tailman from Humboldt County for about an hour, discussing the merits and demerits

of this premarital examination law. Finally he had to leave on account of the fact that we were taking up session, and Tallman says, "Well, you just leave this bill here with me and I'll see what I can do to have it introduced."

Senator Tallman never did present it to his committee for introduction. He just kept it there on his desk. Right across from him was Senator Dressler, who was chairman of the finance committee. Senator Dressier used to play this card game called "Big Indian," and he would play "Big Indian" many times darn near all night long, he and Walter Cox and a few of his old cronies. This one particular morning, he came to the legislature after he had had one of these all-night "Big Indian" card game sessions. So he was sitting there with his head down between his hands and his elbows on his desk? and he evidently had quite a headache, perhaps maybe a little hangover from having too much to drink. This Senator Tallman, he was a kind of a jobber, anyhow. When it came time in the order of business of the senate for the introduction of bills, or new pieces of legislation, Tallman picked up this premarital examination bill for introduction and put it over on Bill Dressler's desk, and he says, "Bill, you introduce that for me because I gotta go to the bathroom." So he just went out in the hallway a little ways and when the present presiding officer asked for introduction of bills, why, Bill, he waved the page over and handed it to the page, and the page took it up to the secretary. When the secretary got about halfway Through reading the title of the bill, why, he began to sit up, and he realized immediately that he had been jobbed.

The result of it, he moved that the reading so far had to be considered first reading, and that the second reading be dispensed with, and the bill be referred to the committee on public morals. By that time, Tallman had come back in and it became a joke. Tallman



got up and he said, "No, I don't think that bill should be referred to public morals. I think that bill should be referred to the fish and game committee."

Well, there was a lot of laughter and kidding around about this bill, and finally it ended up in the judiciary committee. I believe Andy Haight was chairman of that committee, and there was Senator Robbins, and Charles Russell, and myself, and a fellow by the name of Nye W. Tognoni from Eureka County.

When we was having our committee meetings, we came across this bill and Andy Haight, the chairman said, "Well, now what do we do with this?"

I said, "Well, it's had a lot of fun out on the floor until it finally ended up in the judiciary committee." I said, "I would suggest that we put it out of committee without any recommendation." You can do that, you know. You can pass a bill out of committee without either a "do pass" or a "do not pass" or a minority or majority report, and so forth.

Senator Robbins said, "I don't know about that." He said, "That might not be the right thing to do."

Charlie Russell was sitting there. He never said a word.

Finally after we discussed it some more, I said, "Let's put it out on the floor without recommendations to see what happens to it."

So we put it out for the second reading and it was placed on the general file the next day for final reading and passage. Well, when it came time to read this particular bill, why, they read the bill by title and section and so forth, and then the chair asked if there was any remarks, and Charlie Russell got up and he made a wonderful talk in favor of passage of the bill. They asked if there was any further remarks and there weren't any, so they called the roll, and believe it or not, it passed the senate twelve to five.

The business houses in Reno that are very much interested in the marriage business, they was very much opposed to it. We were all staying in Reno—Robbins, and myself, and a few others in the senate. We were staying at the Golden Hotel. Goodness, when we got back to the Golden Hotel that night, why, our telephone began to ring, and they said, "What's the matter with you two idiots, are you trying to kill us?" Even I voted for it. I voted for the bill. I thought it was a darn good bill that we should have examinations before marriage. I told these people that called me on the phone the way I felt about it. I said, "It was a good measure and I voted for it."

They got busy there in Reno right now, believe me, these business houses, and I imagine a lot of business houses from Las Vegas, and boy, they moved in on that assembly, and they got ahold of that bill, and they had the committee sit on it and it never did come out of committee!

It's just an experience. But I can still see Senator Dressier sitting there at his desk with his head between his hands, with this hangover from having played "Big Indian," and then giving this bill (he never even read it before he gave it to the page) and it turned out to be this very controversial premarital examination law. That's one of those things that happen in the legislature.

Governor Pittman at one time vetoed a bill legalizing prostitution that has passed the legislature in 1947. I remember that real well, too. That was towards the end of the session, and I think Senator Tailman was chairman of the public morals committee. Inasmuch as it was towards the end of the session, he introduced this bill and we made it an emergency measure, and it was placed on the general file for third reading and final passage.

There was a senator from White Pine County, I think his name was Horlacher, and

he was a very devout member of the Latter Day Saints religion. In fact, I believe he was a bishop. The fact of the matter is that he used to pray for our senate when we couldn't get someone else that was ordinarily hired to come in and pray. (I say they prayed for the taxpayers, they didn't pray for us legislators; that's jokingly, of course.) But anyway, this fellow Horlacher, he voted for it, too, believe it or not. Finally, when he woke up to the tact that he had voted for this particular bill, he was so angry at Senator Tallman, why, he was really going to go over and have it out with him. The fact of the matter is that he didn't even speak to Senator Tallman the rest of that session. He says, "He betrayed my confidence and trust in him, and I always had thought that whenever he introduced a measure of that kind, or if a measure of that kind would ever be introduced, it certainly wouldn't be from Senator Tailman."

But that bill went through; it went through both houses, and it went on down to the governor's desk, and he vetoed it. At the end of the session when we were giving out the different presents, the senators gave Senator Tallman a beautiful scarlet red tie. You could even hear him coming down the corridor I

If we hadn't had something like that once in a while, the tensions, they built up so greatly over there towards the end of the session, that unless something mirthful arises so that you can kind of relax and laugh a little bit, why, your nerves get pretty edgy.

#### **REMARKS ON LOBBYISTS IN THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE**

Another thing interested me during the legislative sessions. Some of the lobbyists became very annoying. There was influential men that were lobbyists, such as Johnny Mueller, William Cashill, Clark Guild, Howard

Gray, Oliver Thomas, Ray Marks, and many others, high caliber men that were lobbyists there for their clients. They were men that were dependable. They were men representing industry and commerce and people that were vitally interested in the general welfare of the state. Occasionally, someone would get very upset about these fellows, these lobbyists, and they would make a speech on either the assembly floor or in the senate. The senate was never as bad as the assembly, wherein they would just tear these lobbyists to pieces if they were coercing and using undue influence against the legislators. They'd say they should have some kind of a law enacted or a house rule to prohibit them from appearing on the floor at any time, or even try to keep them clear out of the capitol building, which would be strictly unconstitutional.

I've always found in my experiences that this group of men, especially the ones that I have named, that they were very trustworthy. There were many times that there would be pieces of legislation that we would have to consider that we, as individuals, perhaps would have but very little knowledge about, so in order to acquaint ourselves, we would go to these lobbyists and ask them to give us, or find, the necessary information that we were requesting. In my period there, whenever I asked any of these lobbyists for information, if they didn't have it at their fingertips, they would make it a point to go out and get it for me, which was very considerate of them. To intelligently vote on measures you have to know what you're voting on. Sometimes you get into these very controversial measures, and believe me, there has been many a time, and I'm not ashamed to admit it, I've asked in the evenings before I go to sleep, asked for divine guidance to tell me what to do as far as voting for some of these particular measures that I knew were coming up the next day.

Johnny Mueller and Senator Robbins were very, very close friends. Senator Robbins usually sat to the rear, on the right-hand side facing the president's desk. In all the years that I was in that senate I never at any time saw Johnny Mueller sit on the floor of the senate as either the guest of Senator Robbins or any other senator. The minute that the presiding officer would rap the gavel, calling the senate to order, if Johnny Mueller was in the senate chamber, he would immediately rise and get out just as fast as he possibly could. He never, as I remember, sat on the senate floor to be officially introduced so that his name would appear on the journal. That's what always happens when you're officially introduced by any of the senators—your name is entered on the journal of the senate of that particular day. I don't ever remember having seen Johnny Mueller's name in the journal, or having ever been there when he was introduced by anybody. And yet, he was a very powerful influence and a great assist to the people of our state in that legislative branch of our government because he was well-versed in all problems, whether it was in the southern part of the state, the eastern part of the state, or the western part of the state. When our state was given the right and privilege of buying those industries there at Henderson, a bill was introduced giving the state of Nevada the necessary authorization, and I think they bought all those things for around about one dollar.

Johnny Mueller was given the authority to sell those industries down there to practically whomever he saw fit. The hearings that had pertained to this particular bill of authorization was handled by the senate finance committee. It gave him unlimited power and I knew that. So before I would go along with approval of it in this committee,

I made it a point to go to John personally and I told him, "John," I said, "you're asking for authorization here that will give you unlimited power in wheeling and dealing as far as handling these industries down there at Henderson. And," I said, "if you will promise me that without a question of a doubt that you will work for the best interests of the people of Nevada, I'll go along with it because I trust your word." I said, "If you can't give me that promise, I'm in going to try to hold it in committee."

He said, "Well, Rene, you've known me for a long time and I'm vitally interested in the wealth and growth of our state." He said, "So help me, if this bill is passed, I will not under any circumstances let the people of the state of Nevada down."

I said, "Under that kind of a promise from you I'll do everything I possibly can to get a green light out of the finance committee and see what we can do to have it passed in the senate."

Well, it came out of the senate finance committee with a unanimous "do pass" request, and I think it passed the senate unanimously. It also went over to the assembly, and I don't think that there was hearings held at all on it. They passed it and it went down to the governor. It was through the efforts of Johnny Mueller that those people that are now down there that are employing so many people gainfully, and there was never, I don't believe, any under-the-table handing out of any money whatsoever to get those Basic Industries to come into Henderson. I've always been quite proud of John Mueller due to the attitude and the wonderful patriotism that he showed in connection with all of his association with the legislators and the people of the state of Nevada in regard to all of his lobbying. I think it was wonderful. I pay special tribute to him.

To my knowledge there was never a lobbyist that had the broad scope of knowledge of the state of Nevada like John Mueller did. He knew people all over the state of Nevada, whether he was down in Lincoln County around Pioche or Caliente, or up in Elko County, whether he was a Basco, or a cattleman, or whether he was a rancher or a miner, or in any phase of our economy here, in any county. He always knew somebody and it was a wonderful knowledge. He had a very keen mind, and a wonderful photographic memory, too. In other words, whenever he'd meet somebody, he might not see him against for several years, but the next time he'd see him, he'd call him by name.

John Mueller was for many, many years Noble H. Getchell's right-hand man. Then as time went on, I don't know what happened between him and Getchell, but there evidently was some kind of a controversy that arose between them, so he left Getchell and became very closely associated with Norman Biltz.

When John Mueller finally passed away not too long ago, why, he and Norman Biltz and a fellow by the name of Thomas Dant had just entered into a partnership. They bought some agricultural land in and around Lovelock someplace; I don't know just exactly where it was. Norman Biltz and John Mueller were very close friends. The fact of the matter is, the last time I bumped into Norman Biltz in Reno, and this last legislature was in session, I asked Norman if he had been over to the legislature during this session and he said, "No, I lost all interest in the legislature when I lost my pal John Mueller." They were very close. So that's the picture of my thinking on Johnny Mueller.

Now, these other lobbyists—I would like to pay tribute to people like Ray marks, who was connected with the railroad industry, and also Oliver Thomas. They were very fine men. Howard Gray was also connected with big

business; that's Kennecott Copper Company. I think I mentioned him previously in some of my other remarks. I think Clark Guild was primarily associated with the insurance group. They were all very fine lobbyists.

And there were other lobbyists, including Paley, who was representing labor. I think he should have recognition, too, for his activities in the legislature. Then there was Harry DePaoli. He was another one representing labor, a very fair-minded man. Of course, they had a job to do—working definitely to improve working conditions and living conditions and salary conditions for these men that worked with their hands. In all my contacts with them, they never asked me for anything that was out of reason because, as I stated before, I had warned them that anything they came to me with that had merit, I would certainly give it consideration.

We also had some very fine women lobbyists. I never paid too much attention to these women lobbyists. I was interested primarily in what they was lobbying for rather than in the lobbyists themselves. The Parents and Teachers have always had a fine group of women over there lobbying for some of their measures as it pertained to education, and I have always been an ardent supporter of education. The tact of the matter, I was another one that helped start the ball rolling to raise the minimum salaries for teachers in our state. I also played a very important part in allowing the teachers' pension fund to become part of the public retirement system, in which they really bettered themselves two- or three-fold to what they had in their previous retirement system.

#### **LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO EDUCATION**

Any piece of legislation that came up in the legislature that pertained to education, I

was very much of an ardent supporter of it, whether it pertained to salary increases for the teachers, or retirement, or whatever it is. I've always felt that as far as the state of Nevada was concerned, that we should be competitive salary-wise with the highest throughout the nation, because our living conditions as compared with a lot of these other states are not as good, and our living costs are much higher, too. So in order to get good teachers and to have our kids have a good education, I have always been an advocate for good, high salaries for our teachers. It gives the opportunity, as far as our school boards are concerned, to choose the teachers that are going to best teach the children in their respective counties. Without that salary scale, a livable salary scale, why, it was hard for these boards to try to get into our state teachers that were properly trained and prepared to teach our children.

I had quite an argument one time, when I was out campaigning, with an individual who was a very, very well-educated man. In fact, he attended two colleges in Europe. His name was William Thatcher. I believe at one time he owned the Reese River Reveille and was also its editor. In campaigning, I went in to see Bill, as I called him, and he criticized me very severely for the remarks that I had made on the senate floor relative to my thinking about salaries for schoolteachers.

I asked Bill, "why do you feel that way about it?"

And he said, "Well, look. They only work about four or five hours a day, and only five days a week. And," he said, "They only teach school about eight months out of the year." He said, "Why should they be given such fantastic salaries?" He said, "I just can't see it."

His way of thinking was certainly not in accordance with mine, because we all know that there are dedicated teachers, then there's

teachers that just like to teach because it means a living salary to them, and then there's other teachers that shouldn't be teachers. But in order to get the real, true, dedicated teachers, I think it behooves the taxpayers of our state to go all out to see that these school boards are in a position to give good teachers good salaries so that our kids can get a good education. Amen.

I would like to talk about that Peabody formula. There were a lot of friends on the committee that were the ones that secured the Peabody people to come out (I think they came from Tennessee) and make a study of our public school system and propose these various formulas, and it was finally decided upon this, the Peabody formula.

In studying that particular bill, I wasn't particularly in favor of it from the Lander County point of view. But I knew that Clark County and Washoe County were in serious trouble and this formula was the only answer to take care of their problems. So with that thought in mind, I figured, well, the best thing for we senators and representatives from the cow counties in this time of distress to do is to go along with this legislation to help these people in Clark and Washoe Counties to take care of their problems.

Then I said, after maybe three or four years, why, if this particular formula doesn't prove satisfactory, why, then, we can take another look at it and probably amend it so that it will meet the needs and requirements of other counties besides these two largely-populated areas. For that reason I supported the Peabody bill.

Cyril Bastian, now, he was from Lincoln County. There was two or three other formulas that was proposed, the Bastian formula, and some other formula by some other senator or assemblyman, but the end result was the approval of this Peabody formula. And it's



worked very satisfactorily, I think, up until recently.

Did I approve of the way that it was proposed, the naming of a statewide committee, and of the personnel of the committee? Yes, I knew nearly every one of the members on this committee personally, and I knew that they would certainly go into this very thoroughly. There was three members that I knew very well, Howard Gray, Oliver Thomas, and M. E. "Mel" Lundberg. They represented people that are big taxpayers, and if they were interested in promoting something that would take care of our education problem, why, that was, in my book, a very substantial endorsement of this Peabody formula. I don't think it had much trouble getting through either house.

Some of these people changed their minds on the need for increased aid for education. for example, Mr. Lundberg started out absolutely opposed. He was primarily interested in having only the basics, in other words, reading and writing and arithmetic. He didn't want any folderol. I think in a lot of these junior high schools and senior high schools throughout our state of Nevada that we should be able to give our young men and women the right and privilege of studying homemaking work and animal husbandry work and mechanical work and things like that because there's many of these young girls and young men, when they get their high school diploma, why, that's it, they don't go any further. And if they've learned some trade, or the women have learned how to keep house and do some cooking and make a dress or something like that, I think that's a wonderful asset to them, along with the fact that they do have a high school diploma. And that's what I think Lundberg was opposed to. In other words, he wanted to hold costs down, but I don't think you ever heard Howard Gray

or Oliver Thomas make any commitment like that. I think they were all for this expanded program.

I believe that that committee was created by law and Governor Russell made the appointments. The law gave him the authority to make the appointments of the members of this committee and he chose wisely as far as getting many outstanding leaders, lobbyists, so to speak, to make a thorough and complete study. They were the ones that hired this Peabody outfit; it was up to them. The whole study and research that was done in connection with our educational problem in this state was handled by this committee and the researchers that came in here, the Peabody group from Tennessee.

I've been a very great advocate of public education because I think the future of America depends upon the well-educated kids of today. If we, as parents, and citizens of our state and nation, and taxpayers, fail to take care of our youth and give them the opportunity of a good education, I think we are failing in our duty and responsibility.

The fight over the sales tax that supported the Peabody formula was quite an interesting issue. Before that piece of legislation was ever introduced, Senator Ken Johnson and I worked hand in hand to make sure that we had the necessary pledges as far as the "magic nine" votes in the senate. The senate's approach to this revenue measure was to—I think our bill called for either a four or five percent tax, but food and drugs was omitted, and we figured that under the basis of the five percent tax with those two omissions, we would receive about the same revenue that was finally resolved upon when they dropped the tax down to two percent and included practically everything.

We had many hearings in the senate, but inasmuch as we had the "magic nine," why,



we weren't too worried about it. I think that when it finally did hit the floor of the senate, why, it passed nine to eight. It went over to the assembly, and they really chewed on it for quite a few weeks. The reason that they dropped the tax from the five percent level, with food and drugs omitted, was they figured it should be two percent flat on account of the accounting problem.

My colleague, Assemblyman Swackhamer, was very much opposed to the exemption of food and drugs because he was interested in the general mercantile business here in Battle Mountain. He said, "I'll go for the two percent flat tax, whereas I'll vote against the five percent exempt food and drug." He said, "My reason for my position in this is very plain. We'd have to set up a very complicated bookkeeping system because in our inventory of merchandise, we sell darn near everything. We sell patent medicines, which would be exempt under your proposal, and, of course, foods, but we do sell a lot of hardware items, picks and shovels and mining supplies and horseshoes." He said, "It would be a very hard, difficult problem for us to separate these things, especially when you're hiring green clerks and things like that." He said, "Now, I'll go for the two percent flat tax to cover everything but feed and grains and heating fuels." He said, "That should be exempt, but," he said, "I won't go for the five percent." He was a very powerful influence at that time in the assembly. I think he was sitting either as chairman of ways and means, or a member of that committee. The end result was that we compromised. It was getting towards the end of the session.

When Mr. Swackhamer and I got home from having passed the sales tax we did meet with some opposition in the community. There was some people in this county that felt ill towards me due to the fact that I had gone

along on this sales tax, some very influential people. I will not mention their names. But in my book, I think the sales tax is one of the fairest taxes that there is.

With the state of flux of our population, the sales tax meets the needs of our state now, not eighteen months from now. Take your *ad valorem* tax or any of these other taxes, they always come in after the horse has left the barn." But this sales tax meets every need right now. Due to the fact that we are so dependent on tourism and divorce actions and gambling and so forth, there's a lot of people that are coming here today and are gone tomorrow. The only way that you could probably reach those people is by a sales tax. Oh, they moan and cry. And the ones, believe it or not, that cry the most are the schoolteachers. And yet it's so essential, as far as our schools are concerned, that we should have this return from this sales tax to get the monies from these gamblers, these tourists. By the way, I would be willing to wager that more than sixty percent of the revenue that comes from this sales tax source is not paid by the people of the state of Nevada. It's paid by the people that are going through the state of Nevada, people that spend their money here as vacationers. So why should the average person in the state cry about it when they're getting sixty cents on every dollar that's being spent to give them better schools and all of these various needs that we had to have? Of course, there's a lot of people who say, "Soak the rich." Put in an income tax. Put in an inheritance tax. Those are the last straws.

Now here's something that's very interesting. Up until we passed that sales tax, we always had our finger on the gaming industry in this state. Any time they became so high and mighty in their thinking that they was going to start to dictate to the people of the state of Nevada, we had the ace in the

hole with this sales tax. We could just shoosh them out the back door or the front door or out through a couple of windows, and the revenue that we were deriving from that source, we could automatically pick up with the sales tax. The problems of our educational system which we had to meet from some source was one of the main reasons that the sales tax was passed. Now then, we have lost that power to dictate to the gambler. What would happen to the economy of this state tomorrow if we would lose either one of them? We would be in a deplorable financial trouble. We would have to immediately call a special session to figure out the ways and means to meet this financial crisis if we lost either the gaming tax or the sales tax.

The sales tax was put to the vote of the people. I think Lander County voted against it. But I still claim that it's one of the fairest taxes that there is. I think it's a wonderful privilege to be able to live in the state of Nevada. Very few people stop to figure out just exactly how little that tax amounts to on the grocery bill. Say, a family of two or three people spent a hundred dollars a month for groceries. Two percent, two dollars. Two dollars times twelve, twenty-four dollars a year. They send their kids to school, and they have all these various services that we have throughout the state of Nevada. If they can't afford to pay twenty-four dollars a year for that kind of consideration, why, I think it's ridiculous. And after all, they're only paying forty cents out of every tax dollar, the people that are actually living here. So that's pretty doggone cheap benefits.

In our legislature we have some very fine people who come in with wonderful ideas as how they can improve the way of life in the state of Nevada. The one thing that they always fail to bring in with these different improvements is a way to raise the money. Now, I've been on the finance committee session after session. They come in with these

bright ideas to do this, or do that, so that it would make it a lot better for all of us to live. Then you ask them, "Where are we going to get the money to take care of this particular benefit?" They say, "Oh, just tax the people." How ridiculous can they be?

I noticed that this last session—I think someone was either discussing a measure, or a law was actually introduced, and how far it got, I don't know, but any new measure that was going to be advocated, the proponents of that measure had to incorporate in the measure some source of revenue in order that the measure could be workable. I think the one that sponsored that, or was going to sponsor it, was Senator Jim Gibson from Clark County, he and Vernon Bunker. I remember reading it in the press, that they were going to introduce a bill that any new benefit that would be made available to the people of the state of Nevada, anyone that proposed such a measure, they had to also incorporate in that act some source of revenue to make it workable.

Here's an interesting thing that's happened over the years that I've been in the legislature that I believe is worth noting. Then I first went into the legislature, nearly all of the state agencies were funding agencies, agencies in which there was just so much out of each dollar that was definitely earmarked for them. They could do with it what they pleased. We saw that such a practice gave to these various state agencies a bureaucratic setup in their own entity that was detrimental to the best interests of the people of the state of Nevada. So through the legislative commission which was created during my term in office, Jeff Springmeyer brought this to our attention, and he suggested to the commission, "The best way to cure this particular problem is to have all taxes, regardless of whether they were liquor taxes or gaming taxes or whatever

source that they might come from, all be put in the general fund, then when the legislature would meet, these various state agencies would have to submit a budget in which they had to prove to the legislators, especially the finance committee, the basic need for the funds that they needed to carry them through the biennium," In other words, it gave to the people of the state of Nevada, through their representatives in the legislature, better and more thorough control of all of these tax dollars that were coming in from all sources, which I think was sound thinking.

Now then, getting back to this sales tax problem. There have been many people who say, "Now why wasn't the sales tax earmarked especially, definitely, so not a single dollar of it could be spent for any other purpose?" Well, these people are not cognizant of the tact that if that was the only source of revenue to maintain our educational system in this state, it would stave to death because the revenues from the sales tax alone only amounts to twelve or fourteen million dollars a year. Out of every tax dollar that is taken in, anywhere from sixty to ninety percent of it goes for the maintenance and sustenance of our educational system. And it's still to the best interests of the people of our state to have all of these revenues impounded in the general fund and let it be allocated appropriately in accordance with the basis of need of these various departments, and hold them to the budget.

Now, there's been a big scrap in the legislature in the last two or three sessions relative to Nevada Fish and Game. They're not subservient to the legislature, even though the legislature created the Fish and Game Commission, and by the same token they can destroy it. That's an agency of the people. But the Nevada Fish and Game is maintained by revenues that's received from the sale of licenses. Bode Howard, the assembly man

from Humboldt County, had been in there pitching for the last two or three terms to try to bring the Nevada Fish and Game Commission back under the control of the legislature so that they can dole out the money on a basis of need, not according to the whims of the executive committee of the Nevada Fish and Game Commission. That's true.

Now you take a land grant college like the University of Nevada. A certain amount, according to our constitution, has to be set aside in the way of a tax revenue to sustain that university. They have moved that down to the lowest possible point to still be in conformity with the constitution of the state of Nevada, but by the same token, they're doing everything possible to bring the dispensation of funds and the appropriations of the monies for the University under the direct control of the legislature of the state of Nevada, which I don't go along with. There's one exception to the rule as far as my thinking is concerned. What in the dickens does a senator from Humboldt County, or a senator from Lander County, or a senator from Eureka County know about the needs and the requirements in the way of salary scales or building facilities or anything else in connection with the needs of the University? They don't know anything.

I think we have a very fine group as far as the Board of Regents is concerned. They're just as interested in saving tax dollars as we are in the legislature. So consequently, why stick our nose into somebody else's business where it doesn't belong? That's the way I feel about the legislature in connection with trying to run the University.

#### **REMARKS ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION**

During my term in the legislature, the legislative commission was created.

The counsel for the commission was Jeff Springmeyer. The first year it was created—I've forgotten the year it was created—but Jeff is so sincere and honest in his approach to a lot of the problems that he was invited to make speeches in different parts of the state of Nevada. Actually he felt, according to these speeches that we study, he felt that he was the legislature and he had full authority, which was detrimental to the truth.

The session following the creation of this commission, there was some of the older heads in the senate who got together and discussed the feasibility of just abandoning, just repealing the whole deal as far as this legislative commission was concerned. I think I was one of the sponsors of it, and I was sold on its potential, its possibilities, if it was run right. One of the senior senators came to me and he said, "Rene I'm very upset at Jeff Springmeyer." He said, "As far as I'm concerned, why, I would like to introduce an act that would repeal this legislative commission, that would throw it out the window."

And I said, "Well, listen, before we go to that extent, let's give this a little bit of thought. I don't believe that Jeff (and he's a good friend of mine, and he's a good friend of yours, too), I don't think he has had the proper guidance, or the proper restrictions, as to what he can do and what he can't do as the counsel for that legislative commission." I said, "If you don't have any objection, I would appreciate it if you would hold up on the introduction of any legislation to do away with the commission. I would like to have the opportunity of being one of the Republicans to serve on that commission, with another Republican and two Democrats from the senate." (They have four from the senate and four from the assembly.) "Let me see if I can't slow Jeff down." I said, "I know we can pass some

rules and regulations in that commission that would prohibit him from making any kind of a speech anywhere in the United States or in the state of Nevada or in any county, unless he has the full authority of the commission. And if we feel that it would be appropriate that he be allowed to speak, before we'd let him go out and make an address to a Parents and Teachers Association or a Business Women's Association or any Lions Club or Chamber of Commerce, we'd want the text of his speech so that we would have an opportunity to study it and prohibit him from going out and making the people feel that he is the legislature."

Well, evidently I put my thinking across, because this fellow went along with me. He said, "All right, I'll go along with you. I won't introduce an act this time, but," he said, "I'll work to see that you're on this particular committee, too." He said, "If that guy speaks out of turn after you're on there, boy, I'm sure going out after him." And he was a popper! So the final result was that I got on the commission.

Jeff and I were good friends. I said, "Jeff, you just talk too much. You'll get us all in trouble." I said, "By golly, before you make another speech," and this was right before a commission meeting, I outlined the necessary procedures that he would have to go through before he could go out and make any kind of a public address. Every one of the members of the commission agreed with me a hundred percent, and Jeff didn't take any exception to it.

He said, "Well, maybe I did talk out of turn, but I just love this state so much, and I love this legislature, and I'll fight the attorney general and the governor and anybody else to protect you fellows in the legislature." He said, "I know that the press and the radio have put, time and time again, a bad taste in the people's mouths as far as this state legislature

is concerned. A lot of the times, they haven't told the truth."

I said, "Well, that doesn't give you the authority to go out and say that you're the legislature, and that they haven't told the truth and that you're out to safeguard our interests." I said, "That doesn't follow. Under those conditions, Jeff, we want you to prepare a definite set of rules to prohibit you, or anybody else in connection with this commission, from going out and making some kind of a statement to the press or to radio or to any public medium or even a private medium. This is a legislative prerogative, not a commission prerogative."

So he said, "All right, if that's what you fellows want, I'll sure draft them." And he drew up a set of rules that was really rough, and they were rough on him. So we passed the rules and then everything went along fine until the following session.

Then I went to this individual and I said, "Well, what do you think now? Do you still want to introduce that measure to repeal the act creating this legislative commission?"

He said, "No, that's all right. As long as we got men like you just keeping your foot on this guy, why, we're all right."

So nothing was done. I think the legislative commission is a terrific help to the legislature, especially in doing research work and a lot of these investigations regarding certain state departments. We have our own auditing department in that legislative commission, and they've come up with some very good thoughts that's been beneficial to the best interests of the people of the state of Nevada, and I think it's a good investment.

Jeff Springmeyer got shoved aside in the reorganization of this commission, and there was one main reason for that. Russell McDonald was the person that worked diligently to prepare all of the Nevada revised

statutes. He was under the direct employ of the supreme court judges. When the revision of all our Nevada statutes had been completed, we all knew that Russell was a very capable person. So we tried to figure out some way or another wherein we could keep him and he could serve during the legislative session as a bill drafter and still act as the attorney for the legislative commission in connection with all questionable laws that might have been passed by previous sessions or might be proposed by coming sessions. So under those conditions, Jeff was approached and was asked what he thought about it. He was very agreeable to it. He was willing to step down in rank in order to bring this about because he and Russell had become very close friends. They worked hand in hand for the legislative commission and the revision department for the Nevada state law office in Russell McDonald's office. So it worked out very nicely. Russell became the counsel, the big wheel of the legislative commission, and Jeff became the researcher. I believe that's his title at the moment. Jeff does a lot of researching, believe me.

Of course, every once in a while Russell McDonald and Harvey Dickerson cross swords and it's all based primarily on some kind of intent of the legislature. Sometimes in passing a law maybe the right wording isn't used, maybe the right punctuation isn't used, and maybe during some civil action or some kind of an action this particular statute will appear before the district court. The judges on the district bench level, they look at these laws and they say, "The law is not clear. The words are not proper, so what was the intent of the legislature?" Well, if the intent doesn't meet with the approval of the different ones that are involved in the case, bingo, off it goes to the supreme court. So they, in turn, try to interpret what was the intent, if the wordage is not clear, and so forth.



So Jeff, he's gotten into one mix-up after another with the attorney general's office over intent. A lot of these laws that were enacted by the legislature when I was there was written up by Jeff Springmeyer. He's not an attorney, but he does know a terrific amount about law.

Now, I believe, there's a closer liaison between the attorney general's office and Russell McDonald than ever before, although they do conflict in their opinions once in a while. I do believe that they're more close because Russ McDonald is a very brilliant, well-educated attorney. He's had a wonderful practice outside of his activities in connection with the revision of the Nevada statutes division. So I think that whole setup now has leveled off, and I think everybody's happy, and I know that the legislature is happy because they go to Russell McDonald and Jeff Springmeyer continuously for counsel and advice and recommendations relative to certain problems in connection with our statutes, which is fine. That's where they should go. That's our branch, We shouldn't have to go to the attorney general's office; we should go to our own attorney. Then if there's some kind of a dispute, and it's contrary to the concept of thinking as far as the attorney general's office is concerned, why, see if they can't work out their differences, and then if they can't, there's only one other place to go, and that's to the courts. As far as the legislative commission is concerned, I think they're doing a fine job. I'd hate like the dickens to ever see it done away with. I think it's a great assist to the legislature—both the senate and the assembly.

#### **THE PERSONNEL ACT**

I would like to make a few remarks relative to the personnel act. Charlie Russell was the governor at the time the first bill

came in. There's arguments for and arguments against. I happened to be one of those that was against it.

You take, for instance, these various department heads— and it's a case of the old pork barrel deal—when one governor goes out the window, another one comes in, and he wants to put his lieutenants and majors and assistants in as heads of the various state departments. I think that's a good idea, and I'll tell you why. I think it's a good idea because, after all, the governor is the executive of the state of Nevada and he is responsible to the people of the state, of Nevada. In order to get the job done, I think he should have that right and privilege, regardless of whether he's a Republican or a Democrat. He should be able to appoint men and women to key positions so that they are responsible to him, and he can hire them and fire them in accordance with their productivity, or their capabilities, or the like, and any time they fail to be of benefit to the state, he can without any rhyme or reason just blow them out the window.

All right, by the same token, if these department heads are going to be subservient to the governor, by appointment, why shouldn't the personnel in each one of these various departments be subservient to the one that's running that department— a chain of command, right? Because how can a department head be proficient as far as maintaining and running his department if he has a group of people in there that are undermining him and doing everything possible to sabotage him and his department? He can't even fire them according to this personnel act. I've seen it. The only thing that the department head can do is go to the governor and say, "I'm whipped, I'm whipped. I can't can these people—I can't fire them. I know they're sabotaging me, so the best thing for you to do is to put somebody else in my



place and put me someplace else where I can get along with people, if you still want me as one of your lieutenants.

So when this bill was introduced, I went to Governor Russell and talked to him, and I said, "This thing is not right whether you're governor, or a Republican is governor, or a Democrat's a governor, or whatever the case may be." So it finally didn't pass. I think he vetoed it.

Well, the bill was then rewritten. One of the main reasons that Governor Russell did support it the second time was on account of the fact that there was a terrible unrest among all state employees. They felt insecure. There were dedicated employees of the state of Nevada, and then there was a mediocre bunch, and then there was a sabotaging bunch. So consequently, the bill was rewritten. I've forgotten its content, but there were more restrictions. There was an opportunity for a department head, if he had some real excuse, plausible excuse, for letting someone go, why, he could, but the individual still had recourse to a hearing board. We wouldn't want a department head, without any rhyme or reason, to just let someone go because they didn't wear their hair right or their tie right, or something like that. So there was protective measures incorporated in the act. But I still wasn't sold on it. I still feel just like I did then. I think the running of our state government should be left entirely up to the executive branch, and these lieutenants, they should have the same jurisdiction to hire and fire as the governor.

So when this bill finally came up for third and final passage in the senate (I think that's where it originated), I voted against it. I got up and I pleaded with the rest of the senators. Fred Settlemeyer, who was chairman of the finance committee, just sat diagonally across from me. I was the majority floor

leader. I looked at Fred and I said, "Senator Settlemeyer, we're all making a big mistake. Perhaps not only on just the fact that we can hire and fire these people or we can't hire and fire them, and we're giving them protection under the civil rights act, a little civil rights act on the state level. But," I said, "you're going to rue the day, Senator Settlemeyer. You're going to rue the day, just like every senator in this chamber. This is a very poor piece of legislation."

So he laughed. He had a big smile on his face because he figured I was all wet. Ken Johnson was sitting right alongside of him. The result of that vote—I think I was the only one that voted against it, or somebody sympathetically might have felt that they didn't want to see me vote alone and voted against it, too, just to give me a little support. But the next session, the statement I made on that senate floor proved to be right, especially on account of the salary scale.

In that bill there was incorporated this grade and class [schedule]. Believe it or not, the senate finance committee and the money committees of both houses haven't any jurisdiction as to setting any of the salaries for any of these employees, whether they're good, bad, or indifferent. Those men and women are protected under the civil rights act, the personnel act. They can go out and take a coffee break every fifteen minutes, and the department head, he tries to get along with these employees, believe me. So, at the end of a six months' period or the end of the yearly period, or at the end of a two-year period, automatically these individuals receive a raise in their salary by grade and step. There's no control. Now, that's wrong. I honestly believe that employees should be paid according to the amount of work that they do. Now, there are good employees in various state departments, believe me, there's some real

hard-working people. And it breaks down their morale to see some others in that same department shoving the work load over onto them when they are so dedicated to their jobs, their families, and their state, whereas, these other people and these department heads cannot and will not do one thing about it. So those are the bad things against the personnel act.

We went back in session after about two to four years. Senator Settlemeyer told me, he said, "Rene, you was so right and we were so wrong. That bill should never have been passed." So he admitted his error and I was glad to hear him do it because Fred don't very often admit that he's wrong. And it's true. He admitted to me, very openly and frankly, he said, "You were so right, You saw it and we did it. We voted for it, and you didn't." So he said, "That's a feather in your cap."

#### **COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 92**

Another very interesting happening in the legislature was the notorious Senate Bill 92 that gave to the gambling industry the same rights and privileges as anyone involved in any business in the state of Nevada. I was the one that helped introduce it and helped put it through the senate, and I'm proud of the fact that I did do it because that was my thinking. I think that any industry—whether it's gambling or mining or mercantile business, or whatever the case might be— should be given the same consideration. Of course, a lot of the people feel that the gaming industry is a special privilege. Maybe it is and maybe it isn't. There's different ways of thinking about it.

But the history of this Senate Bill 92 is an interesting history. I was asked to introduce this very simple bill. In fact, I've stated just exactly the meat of it. It gave to the gaming

industry the same rights and privileges as anybody in any other business. That was just how simple it was. In other words, they could go to court and sue, and anybody could sue them, and there wouldn't be the controls, of course, that there are under the present statutes, but they would be given the same consideration.

There was evidently some very important statutes being considered over in the assembly when this senate bill was introduced by my committee, which I believe was the public morals committee. All of the press and radio people were very much interested in what was going on over at the assembly. The assembly always has been a haven for the press as far as getting news articles and news releases in order that they could convince their respective bosses that they was really making a living the hard way.

So this bill was introduced. It was referred to committee. The committee considered it, and inasmuch as they sponsored it, they passed it out for a second reading with a recommendation, "do pass." It was read the second time. Of course, the bill, being very simple, it didn't take very long to have it printed. So, when it was introduced one day, it was printed that night, and was back in our books the second day. That being the case, we considered it in committee because that bill was on every senator's desk in their books. We considered it in committee and we didn't feel it was necessary to have any public hearings on it. We felt that it was a simple bill and if there was any controversy in regard to it, why, we would let the assembly take care of it. In other words, we were passing the buck.

I think it was either on the second or third day after introduction, they had the second reading, and the next day it came up on the general file and passed. Crumley, McGowan, Settlemeyer voted against it, and all the rest

of the senators were for it, so that gave it a fourteen to three majority in the senate.

So it passed the senate, and I still didn't think anything about it. Then all of a sudden the editors and the powers that be in connection with the press and the radio woke up to the fact that this bill was well on its way. They jumped on every one of their reporters and said, "Where were you guys when this bill was introduced?" And they put the finger on them for what they considered laxity in reporting. So what did these reporters and radio technicians and everyone else do? They began throwing hammer and tongs at the senate, telling what a vicious piece of legislation this was. They really hammered that out against the senate about this vicious senate bill, and I still claim it's not too vicious. It just gave anybody the same rights and privileges in all industries. But believe me, when the press and the radio got through with it, why, it was the most vicious piece of legislation that had ever been railroaded through a session of the legislature!

Now, getting back to the present piece of legislation [1959 Act] that was enacted, supposedly putting gambling under more strict and stringent controls. In a quick statement, I can state this: if Huey Long had lived and he had had such a weapon as this in his hands that has been conferred upon the executive department of the state of Nevada, he would have perpetuated himself in office for life. Now, that's my thinking about this present setup. In this present deal, you can be an honest gambler, or you can be a crooked gambler. Not that I'm sticking up for the gaming industry, believe me. I haven't got any part or parcel of the gaming industry, never will have, but this gaming board that goes out and investigates and puts spotters on these various games throughout the state, if they're not the right caliber of man, they can put the finger on any gambling table,

in any casino, and their authority cannot be questioned. Any man that is the governor of the state of Nevada, once he gets in there, he makes the appointment as far as the gaming commission is concerned, and the chairman of the gaming board, he has a control there that is terrific. He can have his lieutenants go out, and as far as raising campaign funds, they can walk into any casino in the state of Nevada and say, "We want to get a donation for this governor's campaign," Governor X, let's put it. These people that are running these casinos, that have invested in hotels and gaming casinos, they're afraid to deny a donation. All they can do is sit back in their chair and throw their pencil on the desk and say, "How much?" I know that. It's the truth. It's the absolute truth.

Any governor that's in office is a cinch to be a two-term governor, unless we put through some kind of a law to prohibit a governor being a governor more than two terms— and I think that's a good idea, especially under this particular gaming commission and gambling board setup in our present statutes.

And as I stated before, any governor, I don't care what state he might be from, that has gambling and has the same kind of controls we have, and is not limited as to the number of terms that he can serve in office, if money is the necessity to put on a good, successful campaign, he can get any sum of money that he wants by putting his finger on the gaming industry. I wouldn't want to make any kind of statement about any particular governor such as Sawyer because I don't know, but I do know that Sawyer spent quite a lot of money. Now, whether he got it from different sources like that—well, I don't understand. Let's put it that way. Let's leave that as the question.

When Senate Bill 92 was placed back in the hands of the senate for consideration

relative to either sustaining the governor's veto or overriding it, those of us that supported the act in the first place were quite active to override the governor's (Governor Russell] veto. It's the ethics of the senate that once you give your word to a fellow senator that you will support a measure, under no circumstances whatsoever are you to break that word unless you go to that individual and you get a release. You have to have a definite, good reason to convince the person that you have given your word to, for him to release you. That's the code of the senate.

Senator Ralph Lattin made a big error. He gave his word not only to one senator, but to two or three that he would vote to override the governor's veto on Senate Bill 92. Now, what I'm about to say is not to defame Ralph Lattin, because he's not here to defend himself, but this is the truth—when I first went to the legislature in 1943, I had some pretty good teachers, fellows like Senator Dressler, Senator Robbins, and ex-Senator Noble H. Getchell. The advice that they gave me was whenever I gave my word to a fellow senator that I would support a bill, never under any circumstances whatsoever change my position unless I got a release, because they said if you break your word, you're all through as far as trustworthiness is concerned in that senate chamber. And I found that out right at the very inception, the first year that I was there. Senator Johnson came to me and he had some bill pertaining to Indian legislation that was not controversial whatsoever, and he asked me, he said, "Rene, will you support me on this?"

And I said, "Sure." I hadn't read it or anything, but as time passed, it turned out to be a very controversial measure, and from the hearings that was held on it, why, I found that I was actually on the other side. I had made this commitment to Senator Johnson,

so I went to him and I said, "Ken, I made a commitment to you to support you in this particular bill and I would like to get a release."

Well, Ken Johnson was very fair-minded. He told me, "Rene, if you vote against it, I'm whipped. I've got the 'magic nine' with your support." He said, "If it's that important to you, I'll release you, but I would appreciate it if you would still be with me."

So when the roll was called, I voted with Ken Johnson, and because I kept my word with Senator Ken Johnson, he and I became very, very close friends, all throughout the years that he and I worked in that senate.

Now we'll go back to this Senator Ralph Lattin problem. I listened to former Senator Getchell very diligently and attentively because he had a lot of experience. Besides giving me advice relative to supporting a measure when I had given a fellow senator my word that I would support it, he told me, "Now, Rene, Ralph Lattin is not the senator from Churchill County now, but I wouldn't be surprised if he would run again and be elected." He said, "I want to warn you about him. He's not a man of his word."

I said, "Well, do you have some statement of fact to prove that he isn't a man of his word?"

He said, "Well, certainly. We tried to repeal this in lieu tax amount that Clark County was getting three hundred dollars a year from the federal government and we had the 'magic nine' number with Ralph Lattin's word that he would go along with us. When the roll was called, he voted for Clark County. In other words," he said, "Rene, never trust him if he ever gets back in that senate because he's not a man of his word." And he said, "He's dropped out of that senate for one term. That's when Andy Haight ran and was elected." He said, "I don't think that Andy Haight's going to stay there. I think that he'll probably drop

out of the picture after he serves that one term, and Ralph will run again. And if he does come back," he said, "don't trust him." He said, "I'm just telling you the truth."

So when this veto situation came up on Senate Bill 92, Ralph Lattin had made commitments to two senators that I know of wherein he would support, because he voted for it originally. He said as far as he was concerned, he would vote to override the governor's veto.

These two senators came to me and said, "We got it in the bag. We're going to override the governor's veto."

I said, "Who you got?"

They named them all that had made firm commitment to override the governor's veto, and one of them they quoted was Ralph Lattin. I said, "Nope, you're not going to win this override."

"Why?"

I said, "There's one man in the group that has told you that he was going to go along with you and I wouldn't trust him."

"Who is it?"

I said, "In order to safeguard yourself, If I was you, I'd try to get a couple more." And they worked diligently. They did everything possible to try to get another senator to go along with us, just in case this one would drop out.

Now, I was the majority floor leader, and when this particular special message was considered as far as veto measures (and it's a time-definite deal that's stipulated right on the calendar for that day's business, that at a certain particular hour of a certain day of a certain year, that veto message will be considered), lo and behold, Senator Lattin wasn't in front of me, and that's where he should have been sitting. So I said, "Oh, oh, here it comes." I moved for a recess, and I sent the sergeant at arms after him. The sergeant

at arms finally found him over at the Nevada Industrial Insurance building. He told him, "I got orders from the majority floor leader for you to immediately appear in the senate chamber. They're having a vote."

He said, "Yeah, I know it. But I won't be there."

After ten or fifteen minutes the sergeant at arms came back, and he gave me the message, so I waited until Lattin showed up, then I gave the presiding officer the green light to call the meeting to order.

So Senator Lattin got up and tried to explain to the members of that senate chamber why he was reversing his position. They called the roll, and the governor's veto was sustained. All we needed was that one vote. And even ones like Senator Settlemeyer and Senator Lovelock from Washoe County, they detested Ralph Lattin because he broke his word. They thanked him for reversing his position, but they detested him as a man for breaking his word. Lattin went over to the Democratic side of the house, and he tried to make conversation with some of the senators over there, and I never heard such foul language in my life as from some of those senators. They said, "You dirty, lying, double-crossing son of a bitch, you get out of here or I'll haul off and poke you." That was the language that was used on the floor of the senate. Of course, we was in recess, but from that moment on, Ralph Lattin was all through. He may as well have resigned from the senate right then and there, because nobody would have a thing to do with him.

Some of the others who voted to sustain the veto were honest, sincere men. You understood how they felt. They didn't break their word. You always knew their position. Anyone that's a true statesman in that senate chamber will never criticize a man for his opinion and his vote. That's his prerogative.



That's why he is there. You can still be good friends. Every man is entitled to his own opinion. He must have a definite reason for either supporting a measure or being in opposition to a measure, but the very fact that he doesn't hesitate to let you know, frankly and truthfully, just how he feels about it and he votes accordingly, that's not a detriment, that's an admirable quality in my book. So there you are.

#### **A COMMENT ON ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS**

I believe that I can support the statements that I made on the senate floor. At the moment—even today—with the increasing population of our state, there isn't sufficient reason that I know of for having an annual general session. I am very much in accord with having a general session every two years, with a budget session on even-numbered years, at which, if there is anything of grave importance to be considered, the governor of the state can submit it to that budget session for consideration.

There's no sense of having to call a special session when there is a budget session that is taking place. And that budget session should be limited to a time-definite, either twenty days or thirty days. I think not more than thirty days should be set for that budget session. My reason for such a budget session on even-numbered years is that our economy changes so rapidly you cannot sit down and intelligently guess at what the requirements of our state is going to be for two and a half years ahead. It's just impractical because we're moving too fast. We're living in a jet age. Consequently, I have always thought that the best thing for the state of Nevada would be to have a budget session on the even-numbered years and a general session on the odd-numbered years.

I was very, very much disappointed in that session in 1960 because I felt that it accomplished nothing. I don't care whether it's in the home, or in business, or even in the legislature, an idle mind is the devil's playground. When there isn't enough to consider in the legislature that is of consequence, you get a lot of backbiting party politics, and it's not good for the legislature and it's not good for the people of the state of Nevada. That's why I made that observation—I think it was just because we didn't have enough to do.

To sun up my legislative career, I would like to make one statement. My wife is always criticizing me every time I make it, but when I was appointed to fill Ed Lauritzen's place, I knew most of the Republican senators, and, of course, they always have a caucus meeting prior to the convening of the session. I was, in a sense, hurt by the fact that I wasn't given any kind of recognition as having spent so many years in the senate or having actually served with most of the men that were representing the Republican party. But, in politics, it's just like the old saying, "The king is dead; long live the king." In this case it really proved to be so.

When I went into this caucus meeting it had all been prior arranged that such and such would serve on this committee, and such and such would serve on that committee, without any recognition to me as far as my past experiences are concerned in the legislature, and many of the things that I have done for those very senators that were holding this caucus. They ignored all that, and this hurt my feelings. I didn't expect any special favor or special appointments or any special recognition by those members, but it would have been a nice gesture on the part of those members of that caucus group to have said, "Well, Rene, we're very happy to see you back. We know you've had a lot of experience and



we know that you will be glad to help us and assist us in any category. Is there any special committee that you would like to serve on?" hot necessarily a chairmanship, but just, "Is there any special committee that you would like to serve on?" They didn't even give me that kind of a courtesy.

The only person that showed me any kind of consideration was Senator Walter Whitacre from Lyon County. He said to the chairman, "I believe that Rene, with his experience, should serve as a member of the finance committee."

Senator Settlemeyer was the chairman, and he said, "Well, I certainly would like to have Rene serve on this committee."

But inasmuch as they didn't diplomatically give me that consideration at the very inception of this caucus meeting— as I said, even a politician has an Achilles heel someplace in his character, and that was mine. I felt really hurt, so in order to avert any problem or argument or anything else, I said, "Here's Senator Fransway from Humboldt County. He served on finance last session, and I think he did a pretty good job." I said, "I think he should be returned." I said, "There's also Senator Henry Berrum from Douglas County and he's served on the ways and means committee over in the assembly many sessions. He knows what the score is; perhaps he should be placed on there. But due to the seniority, I think Senator Fransway should be given the first refusal on a seniority basis inasmuch as that seems to be your main way of thinking as far as this caucus meeting is concerned."

So Fransway was put on this committee. So Senator Settlemeyer said to me finally, he said, "Rene, what would you like to do? What would you like to have?"

I said, "Well, Fred, I've had practically every honor that can be conferred on a member, a Republican, in that senate

chamber." I said, "I've been the president pro tern twice. I've served as chairman of judiciary on several occasions, fish and game, aviation. I've served as a member of the finance committee, been majority floor leader several times." I said, "I've had practically every honor that can be conferred on a member in the senate chamber, but," I said, "there's one honor that I've never had."

"Yeah, what's that?"

I said, "You know, Fred, I've never had the honor of sitting over on the Democratic side of the House. I would like to have that honor this particular session."

He said, "If that's what you want, why, that's what you'll have!"

Well, we had so many Republicans that actually there weren't enough seats on the Republican side, so consequently I sat way up in the front row, way ahead of Pete Echeverria, who was senator from Washoe County. And as smart an attorney as Pete Echeverria is, there was several occasions during the legislative session that I tripped him due to my parliamentary knowledge. Pete is a wonderful orator.

I told Pete one day, "You know, Pete, if I had your ability as an orator and my brains, I probably would become President of the United States."

He would get up and he would give all these beautiful flowery speeches with his wonderful command of the English language, and when they'd finally call the roll, I'd vote against it. He'd say, "Darn you, Rene. One of these days, I'm going to make such a wonderful speech, you're going to vote for what I propose."

Forest Lovelock and I were very close and very dear friends, and even though Pete Echeverria has a very keen mind and was very capable of using the English language, I have always felt that Forest Lovelock was just as

smart, if not a little bit smarter than Pete. He had one of the most phenomenal minds as far as grasping the solution to a problem; he just got it right now, due to the fact that he had been in private business for so many years, where he had to make judgments fast and exercise the carrying out of these judgments rapidly. There's only one trouble with Forest and I would tell him this to his face tomorrow if he wanted to know what I thought about him as a legislator. He became too impatient as far as legislative procedure is concerned. Me would get so wrathful. I kept telling him, "Forest, you just can't do that. You've got men and women from all over the state of Nevada, from all walks of life, and," I said, "you cannot ram through any type of legislation until you bring about the meeting of the minds."

He said, "I know, but I see the answer and I know that it's going to go that way eventually. Why can't they do it now?"

I said, "For the simple reason that the legislature just doesn't work that way."

He said, "Well, I guess you're right."

Forest has always been very complimentary to me. He considered me to be one of the finest legislators that he had ever had the privilege of working with. Of course, he wasn't there too long, but due to his activities and his opposition towards labor, why, they went out to get him. That's how he lost. There's no question about it. Washoe County is predominantly Republican, but there was certain issues there that Forest took exception to that was detrimental to the best interests of labor, and they took after him and they got a pretty good candidate to go out and campaign against him. That was it.

Of course, Pete got involved in marital problems and he decided that as far as running again for the office, he'd better back away from it. That's when that young fellow, Roger Bissett, ran.

## **MEMORY SKETCHES OF LEGISLATORS I HAVE KNOWN**

What makes a good legislator? Well, that's the sixty-four-dollar question! Personally, I believe to be a good legislator, you at least have to have some kind of an educational background and practical experiences in the various phases of the economy of a particular county. And I sincerely and honestly believe that you should have some religious background. Also, to be a good legislator, I think you should have a personality that is at least friendly, not detrimental to being able to associate with your fellow legislators. Especially, I'm speaking about the senate. I believe that in that position as senator, you should exercise a good life as far as your morals are concerned, not only during sessions, but also when you're at home. I have seen some senators that were certainly anything but an asset to their county as far as morals were concerned, but as time has gone on, I have seen that condition improve, because in this day that we're living in, with rapid communication and means of transportation, there is very little that can be done in that legislature that the folks at home don't know about. So the men that are in that legislature, they're all quite outstanding people, not only in their own community, but also on the state level, highly respected.

I don't know of a single person in that senate that has ever been reached by bribery. Nearly all the members in that senate are men of finance to such an extent that they're not obligated to anybody. Of course, there's instances where these various interests throughout our state perhaps maybe supply funds to a candidate that's running for an office in the belief that if elected he might be able to give them special favors or special consideration. But I don't think there's too

much of that going on. Of course, if at this time where we have these terrific expenses in connection with, say, campaigning in Clark County or campaigning in Washoe County, you have to be either in a very favorable position financially to carry on your own campaign, or you have to go out and solicit funds in order to be competitive as far as campaigning is concerned. I've talked to different ones that even now are in the senate, and they claim that in Clark County, to actively put on a campaign, to either become an assemblyman or a senator from that county, you have to have not less than \$25,000. That's ridiculous. That's really ridiculous to have to spend that kind of money! So if you're not financially able to pocket that kind of money to carry on an active campaign, naturally you're going to have to get help from the outside, but I honestly believe that most of the men and women that are in the legislature today that have been successful in winning their respective campaigns from these highly populated counties, I don't think they have any obligation to anybody, particularly for special favors.

In recalling memories of senators I've known, I'll start with my first session in the legislature in 1943. There was Senator C. B. Andreasen from Storey County. You know, there's an old saying, "As Vermont goes, so goes the nation." Well, inasmuch as he headed the list as far as the roll call vote was concerned, they always said, "As Andreasen goes, so goes the senate."

Herman Budelman, whom I knew very well, he was from Tonopah and he had a very queer sense of humor. I remember one time my wife came down to visit me and I had her sitting by my side in the senate. Of course, he was a Democrat and was on the other side of the senate chamber, and he saw my wife there, and he knew that it was my wife,

or he wouldn't have said what he did, but he came over, and he said, "Well, good morning, Senator Lemaire. I see you got a new chick with you this morning." My wife looked at me rather funny, and by golly, it was quite cute.

Now this senator, James Caughman, I almost forgot all about him. He was from Mineral County, and Senator Richard H. Cowles, he was from Washoe, and both of them were hard of hearing, and they both sat right up close to the secretary. They were both Republicans. I'll never forget those two as long as I live, for the simple reason that in the morning when they would come to the senate chamber, they never would ask each other how they felt, or anything about how they slept the night before, or if the weather was cold, or anything. The first thing that they said to each other, "How's your battery this morning?" because they both wore earphones. One would say, "Mine's fully charged up. How's yours?"

Then there was Walter Cox from Lyon—he and I became very close friends. And Harry DeVotie, he was a Republican from Esmeralda. He was a very fine person, too. There is a funny thing. Harry DeVotie was a Republican and Harry Wiley was a Democrat, and they were very close friends. I don't know whether it proves out or not, but one would run one term and the other guy would run the next term. In other words, they kind of split, representing their county, Esmeralda.

Then, of course, there was William F. Dressler from Douglas County. He was a very fine person and he certainly loved to play "Dig Indian." That was his forte.

Senator James Farndale, I remember him real well because he was a close friend of Charles Russell's, the senator from White Pine County. Then Andy Haight, I remember him quite well for the simple reason that he always smoked a curved meerschaum pipe. He was

the chairman of our judiciary committee when we considered the premarital law.

Then there was Kenneth Johnson, the senator from Ormsby County. He and I became very, very close friends. John E. Robbins, who I learned to actually love, he was such an outstanding person, and through him I learned a terrific amount about legislative procedure. And then, of course, there was Charles Russell, who sat right behind me my first year in the session, and he was very helpful to me.

Then there was Senator Clarence E. Sommer from Pershing County. He was a very fine person, and he served on the finance committee quite often. Then there was Senator James Wadsworth. He was from Lincoln County. He was a very devout Mormon, but he didn't follow the teachings of the Mormon religion too fluently or graciously; but anyway, he was a very fine person and I remember him real well.

Now going over into the forty-second session, both Andreasen and Budelman were there, Dick Cowles, Walter Cox, Harry DeVotie, and Bill Dressler. Now Press W. Duffin, he became quite a good friend of mine, and he served with me on that first aviation committee. He was from Caliente. He was a young fellow, and he and I got along fine.

Of course, there was James Farndale, he was still there, and Andy Haight, Kenneth Johnson, John Robbins, Charles Russell, William C. Schuman, he was from Mineral County. This was the first time I ever had a chance to meet him. Of course, this was his first session, but I remember that on many occasions, and when I say many occasions, why, Ray Marks used to have Senator Schuman, as well as my wife and I, to his home on several occasions for dinner and entertainment. I enjoyed meeting with him very much.

Then Senator Tailman, A. V. Tallman, he was there the previous session, too. He was a very good friend of mine. And then there's Senator Tognoni, and he was from Eureka County.

Then from Clark County in the forty-third session came C. D. Daker, and he was a politician and a wheeler-dealer, believe me! He accomplished a lot for Clark County during the time that he was there in the legislature.

Senator Ralph Lattin came back into the picture this forty-third session, and I think I've discussed him very thoroughly previously. Senator E. Frandsen Loomis, he was an attorney, and he took Dick Cowles' place. Senator Loomis was quite an outstanding legislator. Being an attorney, he had a very fine gift of the English language, and he was a very fine representative for Washoe County. I don't know whether he became majority floor leader the forty-third session or whether he became majority floor leader forty-fourth session. But, anyway, he was highly respected by the Republican party.

Don McGuirk, he was from Virginia City. Don came from a very fine family, but Don was pretty much of a playboy. He loved to cavort with the women, and so forth. Don and I were pretty good friends, too.

Then there was John Murray from Eureka. He was a very fine person. He later on died, I believe from some kind of a stroke that he had in connection with a trip that he made to Elko to take over the boy's school there. And he was so upset over it; it was really upsetting him. They were having lunch, I think, at the Stockman's Hotel, and he was stricken with this stroke. Never recovered from it.

Then Fred Settlemeyer came into the picture in Douglas County. I believe he succeeded William Dressler. I think Dressler

passed away, and so Senator Settelmeyer was elected to take his place.

Then there is Harry Wiley. We was from Esmeralda County. He was a southern Democrat. He was one of these persons that whenever he gave his word, you could back on it one hundred percent. In later sessions he became quite ill. I think he had silicosis. Even though he was in the hospital (different ones of our legislature, in the senate, would visit him), he would tell them, "Regardless of how sick I might be, if you ever need my vote, you let me know and I'll come over there if I have to hire an ambulance and come in that senate chamber on a stretcher," which is a remarkable statement, but it proved the type of a man that he was.

The forty-fourth session, Senator Horlacher, he was from White Pine County, and how upset he got over the bill that was introduced by Senator Tallman!

The forty-fourth session Harry Munk was elected to come from Pershing County. Harry was a very fine man, too. His wife later on, I believe, served as assistant secretary in the senate for several sessions. This last year she ran for the assemblywoman from this district against Bill Swackhamer, but she didn't get too far.

Then there was E. L. Nores. He used to be judge over in Lincoln County. He ran for the senate and won. He used to run a newspaper over there, and he was in the insurance business in that county. He was quite a character. He was a Democrat and he always relied on Senator Robbins as far as advice as to how to vote. I'll never forget one time, he introduced a bill to do something for his county, and unfortunately, when they called the roll, why, he voted against this bill, and he was quite upset over it. Robbins finally stated to some of us, he said, "You know, if you ever

wanted Nores to vote yes, why, you shook your head to vote no and he would always vote yes."

And then in the forty-fourth session was Fred Strosnider. He came up from Lyon County. I think he beat Walter Cox in an election. Fred Strosnider was a very fine senator. He did a good job.

Then there was Lloyd Wilson that was a new one, and he came up from Mineral County. I don't think he served in the senate too long. I think the assessor in his county passed away, and he resigned to take the appointment. He served in the forty-fifth session, and he evidently decided not to run (in the forty-sixth) in order to take this appointment as assessor from that county.

The forty-fifth session was the first session that Senator B. Mahlon Brown came up from Clark County. He replaced C. U. Baker. Senator Brown has proven himself to be a very, very capable legislator.

In the forty-fifth session there was Forest B. Lovelock. I think I told a little story on Forest as to how impatient he would get when things weren't done immediately.

From Storey County, Walter Reid, a civil engineer from that area, was elected, and he followed Don McGuirk. Walter was a very capable legislator. He did a very good job.

Now in the forty-sixth session, Tailman from Humboldt County decided not to run, so a fellow did by the name of Richard N. Black. He was also a civil engineer, and he ran for the senate and he won very easily.

Then from Nye County, Budelman was injured in some kind of an accident, down in Oakland in a street. He got caught between a streetcar and a car, and it really raised came with him. He was a cripple for a long, long time, and I think he still either walks with crutches or with a cane. He's visited the legislature since he had this accident.



The person that took his place was William J. Frank. Billy and I had become quite good friends. Bill has done a lot of mining, and has been very successful in mining stocks, and he's owned several homes there in Tonopah. Here this last winter, why, my wife and I went down and spent ten days at Furnace Creek ranch visiting with, as I call him, Billy Frank, and his wife, Arlene.

That year, also, Charles Gallagher from White Pine County came in the picture. He was a very capable legislator and he did a very fine job for White Pine County. Whenever we was going to have our picture taken as a group in the senate, why, Senator Gallagher would always arrange us because photography was one of his hobbies. One of the nice things about Charlie, he would take at least two boys from the orphan's home in Carson City during the summertime and take them on a vacation. Each year he'd take two different boys. He'd take them in different parts of the United States, and I think that was quite admirable. I believe I was the floor leader at that time, and I paid special tribute to Senator Gallagher for the kindness that he had shown these boys out there at the orphan school in Carson City. I think it was wonderful. As far as Charlie is concerned, a fellow by the name of Casey Fisher run against Senator Gallagher later on and beat him in that general election.

And also in the forty-sixth session was a fellow by the name of R. R. Orr, Senator Orr from Lincoln County. He was the Ford dealer from Pioche. He was a very fine man and a very capable legislator. I enjoyed the pleasure of having his acquaintanceship.

Also in the forty-sixth session, Farrell Seevers, whom I have known many years previous, was elected to represent Mineral County in the senate. And Farrell was a very fine legislator, and he did a very good job for Mineral County, but I believe later on he

was beaten by Bruce Parks. He became an appointee by Governor Sawyer in some state agency in this parks deal.

Then, in 1953, Walter Whitacre came into the picture. I think he beat Strosnider. That was when Harry Wiley came into the picture from Esmeralda. He was a very fine person. Well, I mentioned him before, because he came in the forty-fourth session.

The forty-seventh session in 1955, Newton Crumley from Elko County was elected. I think Senator Robbins passed out of the picture, or he became so ill that he chose not to run. Here's something that I think is very worthwhile mentioning— the fact that all the years that I was in that legislature the Republican party extended the honor and privilege to Senator John E. Robbins to make the assignment of all the bills that came over from the assembly. So that was how dear he was to the Republicans, even though he was quite an outstanding Democrat. But above all of his party politics, he was really a true Nevadan and we all liked him very much. He served in the senate the longest of anyone that I have ever known. He served there for twenty-four years. That would be six sessions. He was a very fine legislator.

Then Senator James Slattery came over from the assembly, I think. He was elected from Storey County. He's a big, tall, gawky gentleman. Evidently he had been quite an athlete when he was young. Senator Kenneth Johnson remembered him well, and he used to poke fun at him, and I didn't like it. I don't think that anybody should be made fun of in the position of a senator, regardless of how gawky they look or anything like that. I made an observation, I said, "As far as Senator Slattery is concerned, he's a lot smarter than he might appear." I said, "You better kind of watch him because he knows where he's going and how he's going to get there," and he's



proven that in all the years in this legislature as far as that assembly is concerned.

The forty-ninth session—that was the year that W. L. Cord came into the picture from Esmeralda County. E. L. Cord is very widely known due to the fact that he was at one time a manufacturer of the Cord automobile. He served on the finance committee with Senator Johnson as chairman. It was during that session that we passed that table tax bill that gave all that table tax money back to the various counties. Senator Cord played a very important part in getting that legislation passed.

Here's something that's worth note. During his term in office there in the senate, Cord had some mining property over in Moab country. It's what they call this atomic ore, uranium. While he was there, why, he sold that property for \$17 million. He said he had invested about five or six million dollars in the property in order to put it in shape to sell it, and interested with him in that venture was John Mueller and Norman Biltz. I have a picture someplace of the three of them congratulating each other on that sale.

In the forty-eighth session, Floyd Lamb was elected from Lincoln County. He served as county commissioner for several years in his county and he turned out to be a very, very fine legislator. He was quite hot-tempered. I, as majority floor leader, had to call a recess on several occasions. That's one thing—as majority floor leader, I never would talk to any person roughly for not behaving themselves, openly, on the floor. I would, if necessary, move for a short recess, and I'd call them into a room and talk to them, tell them that now they were senators, and for goodness sakes, act that way. And they all highly respected me, I think, because they never challenged me and my request to behave themselves. Senator Lamb followed that advice very strongly after

that. He has become a very capable legislator, and I believe in this last session here, 1967, this makes his second time that he's served as chairman of the finance committee, which is one of the most powerful committees in the senate, which proves my point.

From Eureka County a new face appeared and that was Ed Leutzinger. During his time that he was there in the legislature, a very sad experience took place and I've never forgotten it. A friend of his passed away in Eureka and he went over to the funeral, and as he drove up the main street in Eureka, his son accidentally shot himself. It must have been a terrible tragedy to Senator Leutzinger to appear on the scene and then see his son fall out of his car, shot. He heard the shot and everything. It was quite a tragedy. And regardless of the heartache that that man had, after just about three or four days, he came back to the senate and served his county over and above his grief, which is a remarkable tribute that I wish to pay to him. In a sense it proves the old saying that, "Regardless of the heartache of these actors on the stage, the show still must go on," and Senator Leutzinger proved that by coming back and doing his duty as far as taking care of his obligations to his county.

Senator Wilson McGowan was a new face in the forty-eighth session. He was from Pershing County. Due to our political affiliation, why, Wilson and I had become quite good friends. At the moment, he was successful in running for a position as state controller this last election, and I'm quite proud that he was given that honor by the people of the state of Nevada. The fact of the matter is, why, nearly everyone that knew Wilson and was friendly with him, they thought that he didn't have a chance of winning that election, but that's one thing about politics, a man can never tell which way the wind is going to blow. And we was all very

happy to see him win that office. He was a very good senator, too. I'm very happy and proud that I had that privilege of serving with him.

There's one here, Martin C. Duffy in the forty-ninth session. He was from Esmeralda County. Martin was a very hard person to get acquainted with. I didn't know him really too well. He worked for increasing retirement benefits for the legislators, which he seemed to be primarily interested in. I imagine that he must have served in some kind of a county position in his county previously, before coming to the legislature.

Peter Echeverria was elected and appeared in the forty-ninth session. He took Forest Lovelock's place. He was a very capable person. I think I made an observation in regards to Pete in previous remarks. That was the year that Ed Lauritzen took my place. I think I've gone into that, too.

Then the fiftieth session, William Dial was elected from Ormsby County. He, I think, beat Kenneth Johnson. Bill turned out to be a very fine legislator, a very fine senator. (His name is in the forty-ninth session, also.) I think that was the first session that Senator Monroe came into the senate, 1960. Oh, yes, he was there (in 1959). But anyway, Senator Monroe, he followed Newton Crumley, both very good friends of mine.

In the fiftieth session, William R. Rand was elected from Eureka County. He was an old pioneer of that county and has quite a lot of friends there. He is a very honest and sincere person, but due to his age, he didn't seem to grasp a lot of the things that were taking place around him. But he was very honest and sincere, and if he ever hurt anybody's feelings, why, it was regrettable, because he certainly didn't want to do it.

The fifty-first session—that's when Senator Bruce Parks came into the picture. He went out against Senator Seevers. There was some

skulduggery went on in the Democratic party. This fellow Senator Parks and Senator Echeverria formed a coalition. When the Democrats finally got in the majority in the senate, Bruce Parks was supposed to become the speaker pro tem. Senator Echeverria was to become majority floor leader. And they had a very, very bitter fight over it. In fact there's still animosity existing in the Democratic side of the house over that ambition of those two characters. That's what I'm told.

Senator John Fransway came into the picture and he succeeded Senator Richard M. Black. I was instrumental in getting Senator John Fransway to run for senator from Humboldt County. I think he has certainly lived up to the faith and confidence that I had in him because he's been a very fine legislator. I've heard many compliments for him. He certainly doesn't vote with the crowd. He follows the dictates of his own heart and conscience, believe me, which is an admirable trait.

The fifty-second session was when Henry Berrum came into the picture from Douglas County. He took Senator Settelmeyer's place. He was a very fine legislator. Of course, he served many years in the assembly. Senator Roger Bissett came in from Washoe, and he took Senator Echeverria's place.

Senator Harvey R. Humphrey was elected from Esmeralda County. Harvey and I, we knew each other in Tonopah years ago when I was working down there for the Standard Oil Company, and he's always been resentful towards me, on a friendly basis, of course, because he and I were going with the same girl down there. It was Lucille Askin. I finally talked her out of going with him and going with me. So he always has told me that I'd stolen his girl in Tonopah.. But he has a very sweet wife now, and neither he nor I married

this girl that we were palling around with down there.

The fifty-third session, Jack Bay was elected to serve from Eureka. Jack, he was pretty much of a yes-man, as far as following the dictates of the executive department of the state. Jack was a very fine person; I liked him very much. But I liked to see a man go into that legislature and not be responsive to the executive department downstairs. I think the executive department should be responsive to the legislature department upstairs, because we make the rules.

While I'm thinking about this, there were many times that the governors—I remember these Democratic governors that were downstairs—they would send word up by their messenger for John E. Robbins to come down to their office, and it would really irritate him very much because I heard him tell one of these messengers one time, he said, "You go down and you tell the governor (and I forgot which governor it was) that if he wants to see me, I'm sitting right here at this chair and I'll be glad to have him come up and sit with me, but I'm not going down to see him." And that's the way he thought about the executive department.

An interesting character that was elected from Nye County in the fifty-third session was Emerson Titlow from Tonopah. He had always been registered as a Republican. Our statutes require that before you can file for office under the other party label, you have to have voted for that party in the previous general election. He, having been registered as a Republican, he wanted to file as a Democrat, but he couldn't. So he decided that he would go out and get the necessary signers, and he ran as an independent, and he won. At that particular fifty-third session there was eight Democrats and eight Republicans and this one independent. Well, he was really sitting

in the driver's seat. So both parties were very attentive to him as far as trying to get him to swing over to their side so they'd have the "magic nine." But he had made commitments to the Democratic party to such an extent that he couldn't back away from them. Consequently, he met with the Republicans in a Republican caucus, and his request as far as chairman appointments was too excessive. We just didn't listen to him. We told him, "You better go back over there and stay with your Democrats that you've pledged your support to." So that's what happened to Emerson. I think that covers my associations with these different legislators over the years that I've been in the legislature.



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## COMMENTS ON THE ART OF POLITICS

I believe I've stated before that Charles Russell and I were very close friends since the first session that I served, which was in '43, and he sat directly behind me, and whenever I needed any advice or counsel, why, I didn't hesitate to call upon him. So he and I became very close friends.

Later on in life and in politics, why, Charles Russell became our governor, and I'm not saying this to brag or anything, but it's never been my policy to rush to a telephone and congratulate anyone that's won a political office. In fact, I feel sorry for them most of the time. But what I was going to actually try to describe was the fact that I have never gone and sent any kind of a congratulatory message to anyone that's been successful in politics. I know there has been quite a few people in this area have done it, and to me, I think they're rather two-faced because I knew definitely that they didn't support the candidate. They worked diligently against him, but they, in a conversation over the telephone, they've made statements to this effect, "Well, if it hadn't been for my support, you never would

have made it, and I wish to congratulate you," which is—well, I guess that's politics.

Getting back to Charles Russell. He became governor, and a few months went by, and I had occasion to visit the capital, and due to the friendship that existed between he and I, I made it a point to visit his office. Being a good friend of his, why, I didn't have any difficulty going right in and visiting with him. After we had visited a few minutes, why, I asked Charlie, I said, "Say, Charlie, I would like to have you do me a special favor."

Up until that particular moment, why, he was quite relaxed in his big chair, sitting behind the governor's desk there at the capitol. So he began kind of stiffening up, and I spoke to him along this line, I said, "Charles, you know, I think you can give me a consideration of this favor."

He said, "Well, it all depends what you're going to ask me." He said, "Of course, you and I are good friends, and if there's a possible chance for me to fulfill your request, I'll be happy to do it."

I said, "Well, I think you can do it."

He said, "Well, what is your request?"

I told him, I said, "Well, Charlie, I've known you a long time. You've taken over one of the toughest jobs that anybody can ever ask for—and that's to be governor of this state or any other state." I told him, I said, "I know that there are going to be occasions when perhaps maybe you might need some help." And I shook my finger under his nose and I said, "Now, listen. If and whenever you need help and you fail to call on me, I will never forgive you for it."

He just kind of relaxed back in the chair, and the first thing I noticed, tears was running down his cheeks and he said, "You know, Rene, that's the most wonderful request that I have had so far during my term as governor of this state." He said, "Everybody that's come in here previous to you have always wanted some special favor either for themselves or for some of their friends." He says, "All you've done is just come in here and very plainly—I can't express just exactly what you've said, other than all you want to do is just help me." He said, "I'll never forget that as long as I live."

And he didn't. So Charlie and I were very good friends. Of course, he ran for the third term and got dumped just like Grant Sawyer ran for a third term and got dumped. I think that's a good idea. Maybe we should amend our constitution and prohibit a governor from serving more than two terms. I think that's one of Governor Paul Laxalt's planks. I think he recommended that in his message this last session of the legislature. And I don't remember whether the resolution was passed by both houses at this last session or not. Of course, if they have passed the resolution, it will be necessary again to pass it the next general session and then it will be presented to the people for consideration.

I've been told that someone said that I was one of the most powerful men to ever sit in

the Nevada state legislature. I don't know just exactly what they meant by powerful. I was very influential, there's no question about that. Of course, I think perhaps maybe they based their thinking on the very fact that I served as majority floor leader for a few sessions, and as majority floor leader, you're in favorable position to control and to direct the turn of events as far as procedures in connection with the senate. You have the privilege of working very closely with the presiding officer who is, of course, the lieutenant governor. You also have the privilege of working very closely with the president pro tern. In many instances, if the governor happens to be of your party politics, you act as a liaison between the legislature and the executive branch of the government to push along and to advance all of the various types of legislation that the executive department is primarily interested in. Now that, perhaps, might have had some bearing on the fact that some people thought I was very powerful in the senate.

In my opinion, I do believe that the one who does have great power in the Nevada state senate is the very one who is sitting in as chairman of the finance committee. As I have brought out previously, why, Senator Ken Johnson and I were very, very close friends, and due to that friendship that existed, he and I sort of directed the entire affairs that took place as far as it pertained to legislation that came into our senate. Of course, being in the senate and being on the finance committee, usually there's quite a lot of pressure, influences, that you can exercise. From being on that committee you can force—not actually force, but you can bring enough pressure to bear on certain individuals in the lower house to have favorable consideration for legislation that either the administration is primarily interested in, or you, as individuals, might be primarily interested in. I think that



perhaps maybe might give an insight as to the position that I held.

I will never forget the time when Wendell Willkie returned from that trip, the visitation that he made throughout Russia and China, and he was aspiring for votes in his endeavor to get the nomination of the Republican party. When he came to Reno, he had his secretaries make special efforts to contact and have a meeting with both Senator Ken Johnson and myself, and this occurred at the Riverside Hotel. In our interview with Mr. Willkie, we asked him (he had just come back from this trip through that area in the Far East and through Russia) if we ever became involved in some kind of a conflict with the Communists, what did he feel would be the eventual outcome. Before he answered our question, he gave it considerable thought, and finally he told us that the natural resources of Russia and Siberia and the manpower that existed in those areas is so tremendous, it corresponds greatly to the resources that we have here in our country, in the United States.

Now this interview took place before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, but even then he said that as far as that kind of a conflict, he felt that the United States would eventually win out, but he said it would be a very long, drawn out, prolonged war in which our country, to be successful in such a venture, we would practically have to change our way of life. Everything in our country would have to be given over to the state. The fact of the matter, he said, every man, woman, and child would be directed what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. And he said, of course, we wouldn't call this transition communistic, but it would certainly be necessary to follow those trines and adopt those policies in order to be on the same basis and footing as the communist nations and peoples. He said this war would extend over such a long period

of time, he said there would be undoubtedly several generations born before the final result would be accomplished, and these young people would become accustomed to that particular way of life. He said, "I do not feel that after the war would be accomplished, or we had won it, that they would ever be able to go back to a democratic way of life." He said, "I, as an American, certainly hope that something like that never comes about because I would certainly hate to see our present way of life destroyed, and it would be because we would be accustomed to this new way of life. Everything would be owned and controlled practically by the state." And he said, "That's certainly not a democratic government." I've never forgotten that.

So that's the picture as far as power that both Ken Johnson and I had and exercised during the time that we were in the senate.

Of course, Ken got beat by Senator Dial from Ormsby County. It was an experience of internal party strife that brought that about. But I do believe that as far as Senator Ken Johnson is concerned, he has done more during the time that he was in office, done more for Ormsby County, the city of Carson, than any senator that ever has been in that office.

flow how could we bring pressures on the other legislators to pass a bill? It's done primarily with trading, mostly trading. If some people are on the fence in regard to certain measures and they have some pet measure that they would like to push along to the senate, why, before any consideration would be given to those patronizers by those individuals in the assembly, they would have to act and vote favorably on this other legislation that came over from the senate before we'd even consider theirs. That's the pressure. In other words, it's, in a sense, horse trading. That has gone on in the legislature of

all states for many, many years. That's the way they work. To me it seems ridiculous, because a bill should be either passed or rejected entirely on its merit. It shouldn't be forced into a situation such as I just brought out.

In all of the years that I've been in the legislature, I have never seen a single person in either house that didn't have some legislation that perhaps maybe pertained to their county, that would be beneficial to their county. Even a salary raise bill could be blocked if they didn't give you favorable consideration.

Of course, in the assembly, it was just as important to have the magic number there as in the senate to have any legislation enacted. As long as you had that magic number in the assembly, and you were sure of that number, why, you didn't too much about whether you went and interviewed any of the other members of the assembly or not. There again, very important legislation is essential to the general welfare of the state of Nevada.

That's where many of these lobbyists played a very important hand. For instance, now, if you couldn't reach, say, the delegation that would be from Clark County, you would ask some of these lobbyists that were friendly with some of those members of that delegation to see what they could do to help work towards passage of a certain bill that was so important. They would work towards that end and give you quite a lot of assistance. That's the way legislation is either approved or disapproved in the legislature.

I've had certain influences and pressures brought to bear on me as far as certain legislation that I was very deeply interested in. They would exercise these pressures in order to try to get their own personal legislation through. Usually they don't pay too much attention to the salary bills from each county because that's purely a county measure pertaining only to that county;

it doesn't affect any other county. So any salary raise bill, why, they usually ignore it. The fact of the matter is salary bills, when they're introduced by a senator in the senate, is referred to a select committee consisting of the senator from the respective county. So he, in turn, waits until he hears perhaps maybe from his constituents, and if there's no objection, why, puts it out on the floor with a "do pass" recommendation. of course, there's been some instances, very few, however, where salary bills have been introduced by different senators or assemblymen, and back home in their respective counties, the people made some complaint so they usually would just let it die in the select committee so it wouldn't even hit the floor of either house. So that's the picture.

The people at home have a very, very great influence during the session, believe me. There are a few people that watch very closely the legislation that is introduced in our legislature. Sometimes, even though they might not notice any of this legislation, there are people there, these lobbyists, that feel that the legislation is either detrimental or beneficial to the general welfare of the state, and they will call their friends up in these respective counties and ask them to influence their delegation in the legislature to work either for the act, or against the act, and that's how many people throughout the state become interested or take a part in the activities of the legislature.

I've noticed in later years that the League of Women voters are very watchful of the happenings in connection with legislation. I've also noticed that Parents and Teachers are taking more of an active part as far as education matters are concerned. I've also noticed that the various chambers of commerce throughout the state of Nevada have taken necessary steps to create a

legislative committee in their respective bodies, and these legislative committees watch and review all the legislation that is introduced in the legislature. And any of these chambers of commerce that feel that the legislation is not beneficial or would be harmful if enacted, why, they make their recommendations to the legislature.

So anyone that is interested in their state and their county affairs, and so forth, it behooves them to watch very closely a lot of the laws that are enacted. Of course, now, each legislator that is in the legislature, he usually submits a mailing list of different ones whom he feels would be interested, and the printing office at Carson mails these out regularly to all of this mailing list from each senator in the senate. They usually get together so that there's not a duplication. I know Assemblyman Swackhamer and I, at the beginning of each session, got together and prepared a mailing list and made sure that there wasn't a duplications We tried to keep the leaders of our county informed by sending these, the first prints of bills, so that they would have a chance to look them over.

Of course, I do believe that as time has gone on, and the mailing has become so great, that most of these people that are out in these outlying counties have very little time to review each one of these bills that are printed and mailed out to them by the state printing office. But there's where this legislative committee of these various chambers of commerce play a very important part, because that's the assignment they're given, and they probably meet quite regularly to review all these printed bills that are sent out to them. They naturally watch the articles that are released in the press, too, and what they hear over the radio, so that they can keep abreast of the movement of legislation through the legislature.

I know the Nevada Medical Association, they have men that are quite interested in anything that pertains to their profession. The lawyers have a group that watches the legislation as it is introduced and keep fully advised as to what is going on. So there's many a watchdog throughout our state that's watching every movement that the legislature might make so that they can keep abreast of them.

I have some friends there in Battle Mountain, and I've made it a point on two or three occasions to contact them during these sessions and ask them if they were interested in any particular type of legislation, and also to ask that if there was something that they wanted to know about, to contact me on the telephone and I would be glad to see what I could do as far as giving them the correct information, or give them the procedures that was going along as far as the enactment of certain bills. There was one person here that made me feel rather proud. He said, "Well, Senator, as far as you're concerned, your activities here in this area are so similar to mine, I know that I don't even have to read the bills or get in touch with you because you'll be looking after your interests, and when you're looking after your interests, why, I don't have to worry about mine."

I have hardly ever been on the receiving end of a really great popular pressure, a lot of letters or telegrams on any particular issues. Usually when there is ardent activity to either block a piece of legislation or to promote it, the pressure is directed to the committee where this particular piece of legislation has been assigned. I've noticed that Clark County's representatives in both the assembly and in the senate, they really get just telegram after telegram to either be for or against certain measures that might pertain to their particular area. But I've never had too

many pressures exercised on me in the way of telegrams or anything like that. Of course, I have received some and I've also received some letters. Then, once in a while, you get maybe some kind of a communication from some crank or some half-wit that, well, you know what we can do with that, we put it in the round file, which is the wastebasket.

There are men and women in the Nevada state legislature that—maybe they have been promoted to run by different interests in their respective counties, but there are some that run for the office of senator and the office of assemblyman for the advertising benefit and the prestige benefit that they sometimes obtain from being a senator or an assemblyman. This particular reference is to these attorneys from both Clark County and Washoe County. For instance, from Washoe County there is Senator Loomis, an attorney. When you're a senator, why, you do get a certain amount of prestige and a certain amount of advertising that is beneficial to your business, if you have business that is dependent upon advertising and a little elevated rank as compared to the John O. Citizen. Then besides Loomis there recently was Roger Bissett, and I've noticed that even over in the assembly there's quite a few attorneys that become assemblymen with the idea in mind that it will be beneficial to their profession.

The women that have been over in the assembly, I can't see where there is any instance of personal ambition to get a lot of advertising. I think it's wonderful that women take this active part in our legislative programs. Now we have one senator—I think it's Helen Herr in the senate who is from Clark County, she's a very brilliant woman and she was quite active in all legislative matters in the assembly when she was there representing Clark County. When this reapportionment program went through, why, she campaigned

to become one of the senators from Clark County and wonk due to the fact that she had had her name before the public in her county and she had done an outstanding job.

### CONVENTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

Since I was very active in the Republican party, and had been for many years, having been in the Senate at that particular time, why, at our state convention I was chosen to be a delegate to the Republican national convention that was held in Chicago in 1944. I've forgotten who the rest of the delegates were. I think there was Mayor Tank Smith from Reno, a fellow by the name of Clark from Washoe County, and Getchell, and Albert "Ab" Supp from Wells, and myself—I think there about six delegates chosen.

Of course, we were still at war and transportation was really a problem. It was really difficult to fly on account of the priorities that existed at that time. Any military personnel could "bump" anyone, even if they had reserved seats.

We stayed at the Hotel Sherman in Chicago—and Getchell was a very wonderful host. He wine and dined us; we had a very good time. It was quite an experience for me, and it was also quite an experience for Ab Supp. We roomed together in this Hotel Sherman, and he said when the convention was over he was going to spend some time in Dearborn looking over the Ford factories. But after a few days (I don't think Ab Supp had ever been east of Salt Lake City—he was a Ford dealer in Wells) of going to the convention day after day, even the "speed-ball" taxi drivers began to bother him.

It was a very interesting experience for me. The keynote speaker was Earl Warren. In all the years that I've been in politics, I don't think I've ever heard a man that has the

wonderful talent for putting thought to the people in such a way. In fact, he aroused the delegates to such a point that if someone had gotten up and made a motion that all rules be laid aside, he would have been nominated to run for President of the United States!

The one who presided over that meeting, as I remember, was the speaker of the House for many years, Joe Martin. I met him personally one time when he was in Reno—Noble Getchell introduced me to him. I had the privilege of meeting Robert A. Taft and some of the outstanding national politicians of that time. When they came to nominations for that high office, there was one man who got up and nominated Douglas MacArthur. He was a wonderful person but he hadn't done any pre-campaigning, and when the final votes were counted, there was that one man who had nominated him voting for him, and that's all. They tried to get him to change his position so that the candidate that was nominated would be nominated by acclamation, but this guy wouldn't back off. I had the privilege of also meeting Tom Dewey (who was nominated that year) out in Reno.

When it was time to come home, some of the delegates didn't want to take a chance on the plane so they decided to take the train. I asked Ab Supp if he was going up to Dearborn, and he said, "No, I want to go home." He tried to make plane reservations, and they said they would call him an hour before plane departure. They called about four o'clock in the morning, and he was so excited about going home that he put on his shirt and started out the door without his pants.

"Hey, Ab, you better wait a minute," I said.

We left on the train the next morning and got as far as Denver, and Ab had to wait a day and a half or two days before he could get a flight into Salt Lake. We both got to Salt Lake about the same time. When my wife and

I got to the garage in Wells, he was working out there, and I said, "I bet you've been here about a week."

And he said, "No, I've been here about an hour." It was an enjoyable trip on the train; we had a lot of fun.

Then another convention was held in San Francisco. I wasn't a delegate to that one. I was an alternate delegate, and as an alternate delegate I got a chance to have a lot of fun, too. In our group at that time was Rex Bell. I've forgotten the names of the other ones, but they're still active in politics, except for Rex. I had the privilege of visiting with General Eisenhower at that convention. The Nevada delegation stayed at the Hotel Fielding. We'd get on busses every morning and drive out to the Cow Palace, where the convention was being held. It was an interesting experience, but it was a bit of a repeat performance of the one in '44. I enjoyed it very much. It was a pretty unified deal; there weren't any big battles as to who should be nominated for the office. Not the way it was in '52.

#### **STATEWIDE CAMPAIGNS AND CAMPAIGNERS: THE "RIGHT TO WORK" BILL**

This "Right to Work" bill was passed by referendum petition, and the labor people tried time after time to have the legislature repeal it. People don't realize that when the people have expressed an opinion definitely, anyone in the legislature will take a long look before taking any action that is contrary to what the people of our state decided by a referendum vote.

I knew it was a very controversial issue and I never took any action or part in it. Of course, we've never had any real labor problems in this county. It's not a well-organized union area. Although I do believe that the unions, on two or three occasions, have supplied



funds and have engaged in an endeavor to have some of my opponents beat me. But they have never been successful. It's true, I haven't participated in statewide campaigns.

In large populated counties, party politics is paramount. Party politics, insofar as the small counties is concerned, they vote on their knowledge about him [a candidate] without any particular consideration as to the party. Anyone who runs is a very poor politician if he gets involved in any battle as far as one party fighting another. The electorate in the small counties usually follows party lines: If they're Republicans, they usually vote for Republicans on the state and national levels. And if they're Democrats, they follow the same procedure. On the county level, say, for state senators and assemblymen, they don't pay too much attention to party politics.

we did have a problem when we had this influx of people that came in here on Reese River Valley. When Dan Shovelin ran against me, he was a Democrat and I was a Republican. These people (being Democrats) didn't know either one of us, and so the election was pretty close. That's one reason why I've never participated in these state ballots. If I wasn't running for offices, I'd probably be more active. Take, for instance, our county chairman who has been Republican chairman of the county for many years, Leroy Cassidy. He always takes a very active part in campaigning for the party on the state level, whereas I, even though I'm a member of that board, I keep hands of f pretty much.



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## LANDER COUNTY HISTORICAL NOTES

Everyone who comes into Battle Mountain wonders where it ever got its name. The emigrant trains used to come in here years and years ago, going east and west, mostly west to the gold fields of California. There used to be a Renegade tribe of Shoshone Indians in this area that played havoc with some of these emigrant trains coming through here. To the east of us there is a point called Rockbend Point, and these Indians could get up on this point and they could see these emigrant trains coming many days before they could ever get into this area around here where Battle Mountain is now located. So, consequently, they would be well prepared to attack, or ambush, or drive these emigrants into turmoil. But there was one group of emigrants that came in here and retreated into what is now known as the Battle Mountain range of mountains. And there was a war in a place now called Copper Basin. It was there that they made their circle of wagons and had this big battle with the Indians. They were successful in driving back the Indians. It was

from that battle that this Battle Mountain range of mountains was named.

When the railroad was first built here in the late '60's and early '70s, they used to pipe water from a spring three and a half miles from the base of one of these Elephant Head Mountains—it looks like a chain of elephants walking along. At the base of one of these mountains was a spring called the Blossom Springs. The railroad used to pipe that water to this Battle Mountain siding, which was used in those days as a coaling station for the Central Pacific system. Because they were using steam engines, they would stop here in Battle Mountain to replenish their water supply and so replenish their fuel. Naturally, in those days, water was at a premium, as it is today. Since there was water here and there was a side track facility, Battle Mountain became the railhead, serving all these mining facilities in this particular locality, and also the county seat, instead of having it up at old Argenta, where my grandparents were when they first hit this country.

I think one interesting historical area that has been overlooked is the Copper Basin area. That's the area that this town is named after, that that mountain range is named after, and it was quite a battle. Another interesting historical fact (and I have seen this also in history books where you can find a verification of it), the Copper Canyon mine actually is the oldest mining property in the state of Nevada. When these emigrants used to come through here—now, this is before the discovery of the Comstock—when these emigrant trains used to come through here and they were attacked by these Indians, they noticed the war paint that they were using as a red oxide. They used this red oxide to paint their faces, and these were war colors. Some of these emigrants were evidently interested in minerals because they kept wondering where this red oxide was coming from that these Indians were getting. It is an indication of some kind of a mineral. As time went on, why, they located this red oxide, and it was over in Copper Canyon. And in exploring this canyon, they found copper. I've forgotten the name of the company—I think it was the Maricopa or the old Glasgow Western, this company that was formed. They used to mine that copper and they used to haul it by wagon train from Copper Canyon clear through to Sacramento, where it was placed as ballast in ships. And these ships would carry that copper ore in the holds as ballast clear to Swansea, England, where it was smelted. And I'm very sure in my mind that Copper Canyon was the first actual mining venture in the state of Nevada. I might be wrong, but I still think it's older than the Comstock. Now, there is an area that I think should have some historical consideration given to it as far as its background.

Of course, too, there is the town of Austin, and there is the former county seat,

the first county seat in this county, which was located down around Ledlie, and its name was Jacobsville. And then the Pony Express, and the finding of this silver ore in the Pony Canyon, there at Austin. A Pony Express [rider] uncovered this silver ore in Pony Canyon. There is a nice monument there that I saw the last time I drove through.

Now, Jacobsville is a historical place because that used to be the gathering place of all the wagon trains that used to go through there. Even my Grandfather Watt used to stop there with his pack trains. There is a certain amount of water available there, and some pasture, and they stopped there to let their animals recuperate from some of these vast distances that they had to travel. They tell an interesting story about the "bullwhacker quartz." This is complete hearsay.

A fellow drove into Jacobsville and turned his oxen loose so that they could graze on one of the hillsides nearby. After he had rested himself for several days, he went to get his oxen and take off. He was gone from camp several days. When he finally got back, he was carrying some ore samples that he had found on one of the nearby hills. There was a message in Jacobsville for him saying that some of his people had passed away back East and that he was urgently requested to return home. He sold his outfit and got some horses and went back East. The people who got his outfit, his wagon and his animals—after he had departed, naturally—began looking around and they opened up this jockey box, as they call it, at the front end of the wagon, and there was this sack with these pieces of rocks. And on examining these rocks, they found a very, very rich piece of gold ore. It was so rich you could just see it—it was speckled all through the rock. And a piece of that ore is still held in the Mining Department of the University of Nevada.

A friend of mine, who was working in the Mining Department there at the University, he come out here and spent I don't know how many weeks in and around that area trying to find this "bullwhacker quartz," but he never could find it. Maybe someday somebody will find it. But that is one of those lost gold mine deals, and every town in the United States has always got a lost gold mine or a lost silver mine or something like that. That's the story about the "bullwhacker quartz."

Then, of course, there is the story about the Stokes Castle. I think Mrs. Molly Magee Knudtsen could give you a better rundown on That. She's now the proprietress of the Stokes Castle. That's the stone structure that's up on the hillside. It's an historical monument.

The old stagecoaches used to operate between Austin and Battle Mountain in the Reese River Canyon, south of Battle Mountain about fifty miles. There is a point in this canyon that is named Robbers' Point. When these coaches used to go back and forth between Battle Mountain and Austin, the stages was robbed, I think two or three times, at this one point. It, s an ideal place, if anyone wants to attempt a robbery of the stagecoach, to just sit and wait there until that stagecoach comes along. Now these two or three robberies that took place there, I don't think they ever did find out who the robbers were. They'd have posses out, and so on and so forth, trying to locate them. And what the actual amounts of money that these robbers obtained from these robberies, I don't know who the passengers were or anything. Now, when my dad used to go to Austin in the summertime to do his work at the county assessor's, we never passed that point that he didn't mention that it was Robbers' Point. It's quite a little point on the road that goes from here to Austin, so I just thought I would mention it.

## **TRANSCONTINENTAL HIGHWAY THROUGH BATTLE MOUNTAIN**

I've already told the story about my dad and the bicycle race. That was actually the first maneuver that was ever made toward establishing a road or highway between San Francisco and New York. Of course—naturally, the racers followed the railroad. There wasn't any roadways at all, to speak of, when my dad made that bicycle relay race.

The first designation of the route through here was called the Pike's Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway. And, of course, that Pike's Peak name was because Denver wanted the transcontinental highway to go through Denver. Then later on, the activity in connection with this transcontinental proposed road was called the Overland Trail. Later on, it was called the Victory Highway. Still later on, it was called the U. S. 40. Now, today, it's being given the name of Interstate 80.

But getting back to the work the people here in our community did to endeavor to help establish this roadway, we used to have sort of picnics and we'd go out and pick out all these rocks, especially around Argenta Point. The road at that time used to go over what they call Shoshone Point. That's a few miles this side of Beowawe. And we used to go out there and pick all the rocks and have a regular picnic. It was a lot of fun.

Later on, why, the roadway was changed from going up on the south side of the railroad. It went across the valley to a railroad siding called Jenkins, and then went around by Rock Bend Point, and then to Rock Creek, and then across Boulder Flat, across the new Maggie Summit, where this new Newmont gold property has been discovered, and then it went down Maggie Creek into Carlin, and then up along the railroad to the Carlin

Canyon and into Elko. That was one route. Then, of course, they had this first one there that went around the Shoshone Point and Beowawe and over Emigrant Pass, where the present highway is, down into Carlin. But this Boulder Flat road was quite a road. It was about twelve miles across the valley, and due to the composition of the soil, this was nothing but a dust bowl, so to speak. With just the small amount of traffic that existed in those days, why, it was sometimes smoother to get out and ride in the brush than it was to go along on these rutted roads, and the dust was just terrible. At one time, I believe, there was about twenty-one or thirty parallel roads going across that valley. You'd start across there, and it didn't make any difference which one you took you'd wish you was on one of the others. How that valley ever got called the Boulder Flat, I don't know, because there isn't a boulder in it; it's just nothing but dust.

When U. S. 40 highway and U. S. 50 was established, we raised funds. We created this U. S. Highway 40 Association and had directors from each one of the towns, beginning with Lovelock on the west of us to Wells on the east of us. We had to go out and raise funds to make brochures and also to put up signs at the junctions at Fernley and also at Wendover. It became quite an expensive project because we were in competition with our neighbors to the south and they were just as aggressive trying to get that tourist business as we were. So finally, through the activities of the officers (I happened to be secretary and Dan Shovelin was president), we arranged to have a meeting in Fallon, Nevada, to see if we couldn't consolidate our efforts to the extent that we would become unified in our own state, and then we could go down into northern and central California and get them to work with us to put on a concerted advertising campaign to try to get

the traffic across either 40 or 50 into central and northern California.

The first year that that was done, we were successful in our meeting with the people in Fallon and the ones that represented U. S. 50. So we pooled our funds—I think we put up about ten times as much money as U. S. 50 did. But by being unified like that, we were able to hold a meeting in Sacramento. And at this Sacramento meeting there was representation from the Greyhound Bus Lines, and the railroad, and the Redwood Empire Highway Association, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, Lake Tahoe-Sierra Association—I think at this meeting there was around about a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five representatives. So it was really quite a meeting. And after full discussion, they were convinced in their own minds that a unification and a consolidation of all these funds from the various chambers of commerce and the various advertising medias of all these organizations, if they were pooled, it would be more advantageous than each one going his separate way. And that being the case, then they received the approval of their respective chambers of commerce. I think the first year, the fund amount was \$35,000. And out of that, I think the state of Nevada (or the U. S. 40 and U. S. 50 Highway Association) only put up \$1,500. So that was a pretty good investment on our part.

They hired a man that went into Colorado and Wyoming and Montana who did nothing else but visit all the tourist bureaus. He contacted all the chambers of commerce. He distributed all of these brochures throughout the hotels and motels, and any place that would have sort of a directive force as far as tourists was concerned, to endeavor to bring them across the state of Nevada into central and northern California. This program was so successful that the second year, I think,

the total amount of moneys raised to take care of this advertising program amounted to better than \$60,000. And that was more successful, and naturally, it was so successful that the following year, they raised \$75,000. And, of course, the amount of money the U. S. 40 Highway and the U. S. SO Highway Association put into it was very, very infinitesimal, compared to what these other organizations was putting into this fund. Then something happened. They got so successful that the thing sort of fell apart at the seams.

But it's interesting to me to note that my dad participated in the first bicycle ride that eventually established a route through here. Naturally, the old Emigrant Trail that cane through here was the prime indication that eventually the railroads would follow their trails. Then the bicycles established the possibility of a roadway, and then the early time automobiles.

An interesting thing happened years ago. They held a race in this state in which they invited drivers from California and Nevada to participate. The race started at Reno. The first day they were to go from Reno to Elko, then from Elko to Ely the second day, and then tram Ely back to Reno. Believe me, in those days, the vehicles that they had to drive were very uncertain, even if they were only going to get around the block. And the roads were terrible. That's when they went across that Boulder Flat that I described previously.

Howard and Paddy Doyle were driving a Model T Ford with just a couple of bucket seats and a gas tank, and they had some steel wheels on it. When they drove into Battle Mountain, they said, "Where is the Ford garage?" And just about that time one of these steel wheels folded up underneath them. It really went to pieces. And in less than fifteen minutes, they had pulled this wheel off. My dad had rushed across the street and picked

up another Ford wheel and had the tire mounted on it and put it back on this Ford, and I think their lost time in our community, on account of a broken wheel, was less than thirty minutes, which is quite a happening. Every once in a while now I bump into Paddy Doyle and he remarks about that experience.

Then there was a gentleman by the name of Weaver, who was a Studebaker dealer from San Francisco. He was driving one of the late model Studebakers that year. And he got out here on this Boulder Flat and he hit one of these chuckholes and he broke the frame. He was quite upset about it. He said, "The next time I come up to Nevada and enter some kind of a race, I hope somebody shoots me." He was quite disgusted.

So those were some of the highlights as far as the establishing of this route. Of course, when the government, the Bureau of Public Roads, decided to choose a special route here for this Interstate 80 system, evidently some of the engineers that were back in Washington, they took a look at the map, and there is quite a curve that starts here at Battle Mountain and goes up northwest up around Winnemucca and then down to Lovelock. The air mile distance from Battle Mountain, or Argenta Point, which is east of us here, from that point to Hazen, Nevada, by air mile distance, is about sixty-five miles shorter. But these people back in Washington didn't realize that there is several mountain ranges as well as the Carson Sink and also Dixie Valley, which is nothing more than a big bog, that have to be traversed. We had quite a battle there for a while to convince these engineers back in Washington that that route, even though it seemed quite a bit shorter, was an impractical route to use. And I remember Mr. William T. "Billy" Holcomb, who was the state engineer at that time, he and a couple of his employed men got a jeep

and came out and traversed this route as it was proposed. And to meet the standards, as far as grades were concerned and everything else, when they finally took the total mileage, the distance would have been only twenty-seven miles shorter, actually, than going around by the present route. So with the pressure that was brought to bear on the Bureau of Public Roads by not only the people living in Battle Mountain, Winnemucca, and Lovelock, but also by the Highway Department, why, the Bureau of Public Roads was convinced that the best route to take was to follow the old Emigrant Trail through this northern part of our state, and also the railroad and the present highway system. But that was really a scare to all of us.



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## CONCLUSION

I've done a lot of racing, and airplane flying, and playing musical instruments, and then orchestras. If it hadn't been for the fact that I was able to play for dances, and I was a fairly good musician, I don't know what we'd have done during the Depression. We were able to pick up a few extra dollars to supplement our cost of living, which came in very handy.

And another thing that being musical helped out quite a bit was on these campaign tours that we'd make. We'd go out to Copper Canyon and play for little dances out there and over to Raleigh. It was a wonderful way to get to know the people and to get your name in front of them. If you played good music, I imagine you got their votes. If you played bad music, they "got" you at the polls. I was pretty fortunate at winning my campaigns.

I also helped my cousin quite often when he was campaigning. Of course, he had to run every two years, whereas I only had to run every four years. He played the saxophone, and whenever he played the saxophone, I played the banjo. We did have rhythm.

Whether we put out good music or not, people seemed to enjoy it. We had a lot of fun.

So I've been in politics, and I've been in finance. Actually my life has been a thrilling experience— at least to me. I've enjoyed it very much. And now that I'm in that twilight period, it's nice to look back and think about those experiences I've had and how well I've enjoyed them. I had wonderful parents and a wonderful family. I had a wonderful partner in my marital life who stood by my side in all kinds of trials, troubles, and tribulations. She's a wonderful mate.

We've had two children—Henrietta, who's not with us any more, and Rene Marie, who lives in Stockton. We only had the two girls.

My oldest daughter, who's not with us, she had three children. Her husband remarried about six or seven years later. He married a very fine woman by the name of Rand. Her father used to be senator from Eureka, so I knew him personally, and they're a very nice family. She's a registered nurse. Since she and Melvin Jones got married, they've had one child. They all seem to be quite happy and

getting along fine. My oldest granddaughter, Helen Jones, she graduated from high school this year, and her sister, Cherie, and little Richard (we call him “Dick”), they’re getting along nicely in school. They’re living out on a ranch in Pine Valley.

The daughter that lives in Stockton was named after me— we were hoping she would be a boy. Her name is Rene Marie McHugh. She’s married to an insurance broker. His name is John— John McHugh. And he is from an old Irish family that have been in Stockton practically ever since Stockton started out as a community. They are a very nice fatly, a large family. The McHughes are very prominent— doctors, and so forth. John’s father, Richard “Dick” McHugh, is now retired from the police department down there. At one time he was the chief of police in Stockton, which is a very responsible position. He’s retired now, and they say that he’s driving his wife crazy, sticking around home.

Rene has three children. The oldest boy, the first child, is Tommy McHugh. The second child is a girl, Sally. And the third child, her name is Kate. My daughter, Rene, named her Kate after Kate Lemaire, who is my oldest aunt and who is still living. This made Aunt Kate feel quite proud, although she said, “Why in the dickens would anyone want to name anybody after me?” She said, “I sometimes wonder about their intelligence.” But she is a very sweet person, and this little girl, little Kate, she’s a very sweet little girl, too. All in all, I have a lot to be thankful for and a lot to be proud of, believe me.

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